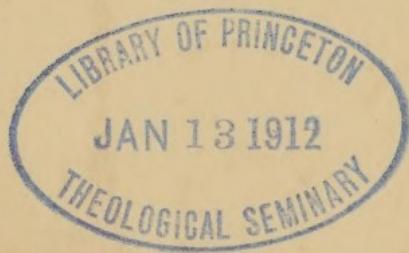


THE
CHRIST
OF THE
GOSPELS

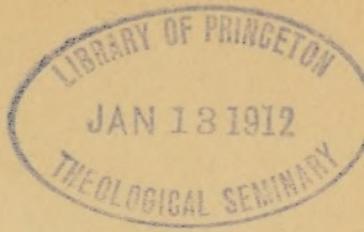
V.W.HOLDSWORTH
M.A.



BT 301 .H728 1911
Holdsworth, W. W. 1859-1929.
The Christ of the Gospels

THE CHRIST OF THE GOSPELS

The 41st Fernley Lecture



THE CHRIST OF THE GOSPELS

BY THE
REV. W. W. HOLDSWORTH, M.A.

*Tutor in New Testament Language and
Literature, Handsworth College*

London

CHARLES H. KELLY

25-35 CITY ROAD, AND 26 PATERNOSTER Row, E.C.

FIRST EDITION 1911

I DEDICATE THIS WORK
TO THE MEMORY
OF
MY FATHER

*Extract from the Trust-Deed executed by the
late John Fernley.*

. . . 'The design of the Sermon or Lecture shall be, to explain and defend the Theological doctrines or the Ecclesiastical polity of the Wesleyan Methodist Connexion, with special reference and adaptation to the necessities of the times, and with a view to the benefit of the Candidates who are about to be ordained by the Conference to the Ministry, and of other Ministers, and also of the Laymen who usually attend the Conference Committees, and the subject of the Sermon or Lecture shall be fixed in accordance with this design.'

PREFACE

I HAVE sought to carry out the purpose of the Founder of this Lecture as indicated in the Trust-Deed, and, with others, I have found it difficult in a single treatise to meet the needs of a popular audience, and to satisfy the demands of those already versed in biblical study and criticism.

The subject committed to me is one which will exhaust powers far greater than those which I possess, but such study as I have been able to secure has convinced me of its supreme importance at the present time, and I have endeavoured to bring before those who have entered into the Methodist Communion of the Christian Church the findings of recent criticism of the Gospels, and to indicate the effect of such criticism on the message which those Gospels declare.

The lecture makes no claim to originality. Thoughts gathered from many authors will appear in the pages which follow; and while I have sought

Preface

to make what acknowledgement was possible, a considerable amount of indebtedness must remain unexpressed. My colleagues on the Staff of Handsworth College have laid me under great obligation for wise counsel generously given. I am specially indebted to Dr. Tasker and to the Rev. R. N. Flew, the latter of whom has been kind enough to read and correct the proofs.

W. W. HOLDSWORTH.

HANDSWORTH COLLEGE,
June 1911.

SYNOPSIS OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTORY	- - - - -	3
--------------	-----------	---

The word 'Gospel' is not sufficiently definitive; it stands for both vehicle and content.

The challenge in the Personality presented in the Gospels. Are the terms 'Jesus' and 'Christ' mutually exclusive? The methods of modern Criticism are twofold. Comparative Religion; the apotheosis of the human. The critical study of the Record. Prejudice against the supernatural a *petitio principii*.

A higher synthesis finds room for both 'Jesus' and 'Christ.'

There is thus a doctrine of the Person of Christ in the New Testament, and the basis of this doctrine is found in the Gospels.

CHAPTER II

THE CHRISTOLOGY OF THE NEW TESTAMENT	-	21 ¹
--------------------------------------	---	-----------------

The Christology of the New Testament may be studied in three sections:—

1. The Epistle to the Hebrews. The underlying spiritual, the permanent element in world of change, revealed by Christ. The significance of His Sonship.

Contents

Exposition of cardinal passages indicating the transcendent nature of this divine Son. This Son is the historic Jesus.

2. Pauline Christology. Examination limited to three undisputed Epistles. The Epistle to the Galatians. The note of Deity in the position assigned to Christ is joined to that of a real humanity. The Christ is Jesus. The Epistles to the Romans and to the Corinthians reveal the same synthesis.

3. Petrine Christology—The First Epistle of St. Peter, and the speeches of the same Apostle as given in the Acts of the Apostles. ‘This Jesus’ is both ‘Lord and Messiah.’

This examination shows that to account for the Deification of Jesus as another case of common apotheosis is impossible; the Deification is complete and the interval of time is not sufficient.

At the back of the spiritual aspect of Christ’s Person there is a clear historic basis.

The metaphysical issues are in keeping with the facts stated; given the history, St. Paul’s conclusions are inevitable.

Can we trace this current of thought any nearer to its source?—Do the Gospels support the interpretation of the Apostolic Church?

CHAPTER III

THE GOSPEL RECORD

55

A treasure in earthen vessels—a divine content in human setting. The sources of the Gospel are to be found not in oral tradition, but in documents:—

1. The Markan element in the three Synoptic Gospels. Three editions of the Memoirs of St. Peter’s preaching drawn up by St. Mark. Indications of this three-fold work in the Markan narrative. Behind St. Mark—himself a contemporary of Christ—stands St. Peter.

2. The Matthaean Logia. A collection in Aramaic

Contents

xiii

of the Sayings of Christ. 'Q' in all probability an earlier collection of Sayings thrown together without purpose or plan. The Matthaean arrangement is to be found in the First Gospel. It consists of five blocks of Sayings, each block bearing upon some aspect of 'The Kingdom of Heaven.' The Logia in the Third Gospel were taken not from St. Matthew's collection, but from 'Q' or from some earlier collection.

3. The special sources of St. Luke. The Prologue of the Third Gospel. The Markan section. St. Luke's use of the Logia differs from that of St. Matthew. The Travel Document. Its relation to other sections of the Third Gospel. Was its author a woman?—Joanna, the wife of Chusa, Herod's steward. The Nativity section. Its connexion with chapter xxiv. The Resurrection Story. St. Luke's departure from the Markan account.

4. The Johannine Supplement. The difference between the Fourth Gospel and the Synoptics. This is more in treatment than in subject-matter. The claim of the Fourth Gospel to be historical. Its scene is Judaean rather than Galilean. This accounts for differences in geographical setting, and in the dramatis personae. The raising of Lazarus. Why this critical episode is not related in the Synoptic Gospels. The Eucharistic teaching of the Fourth Gospel. The discourses of Christ in the Fourth Gospel. The subjective element in the account of these. The interpretative method. Whoever the writer may have been, he was in a position in which he was qualified to interpret.

CHAPTER IV

THE SYNOPTIC JESUS - - - - - 129

A candid examination of the Gospels increases their authority.

They reveal a human Person. Our Lord's divinity is best discovered in and through His perfect humanity. The modern call for a fuller presentation of His humanity.

Contents

- This is given, though not exclusively, in the Synoptic Gospels.
- Three stages in the developing self-consciousness of Christ are given in the Markan narrative.
- The increasing claim of Messianic functions—‘The Son of Man.’
- The Messianic significance of the Eucharistic Feast.
- The Matthaean ‘Sayings,’ not being chronologically arranged, reveal all stages of this development in the consciousness of Jesus.
- The Sermon on the Mount—a new view of God and the World—contains the germ of Pauline and Johannine teaching.
- The Sayings of Jesus indicate the position He assumes (Matt. xi. 25-30).
- The Apocalyptic element in the teaching of Jesus.

CHAPTER V

THE JOHANNINE CHRIST - - - - - 161

- The interpretation of the Person of Christ in the early Church.
- Similar notes in the Johannine interpretation.
- This interpretation implicit in earlier Gospels.
- The development of consciousness in Jesus is not before St. John. He starts with the accepted divinity and shows its significance for faith.
- The central idea of Christ’s Person in this Gospel is that of sonship. Sonship implies Fatherhood in God, a fellowship of love in the Godhead.
- The doctrine of the Logos. The Logos related to both God and man.
- ‘Fellowship in the Life Eternal’ is the theme of both prologue and Gospel.
- Fellowship in Judging.
- The doctrine of the Eucharist.
- This fellowship described in terms of ‘knowledge’ and ‘life.’

Contents

xv

Faith the means of attaining to this life. The doctrine of faith in the Fourth Gospel.

Such an interpretation of the Person of Christ is an essential part of the Gospel of the Grace of God.

CHAPTER VI

THE HIGHER SYNTHESIS—JESUS CHRIST - - - 191

The modern antithesis—Jesus or Christ.

The Christian Church has accepted a synthesis difficult to explain.

Antioch and Alexandria—the historical and the transcendental view.

The modern emphasis on the former. The Eschatological School. Jewish Apocalypses. Eschatology, which is only one element in the teaching of Jesus, if exclusively considered, is only a partial basis of interpretation. The Kingdom of Heaven differs from the Messianic kingdom of the apocalypticists.

The teaching of the Apocalyptic School is destructive of Christianity.

The Theological method. The doctrine of Kenosis. Does modern Psychology afford any hope of solution?

The experimental method. The experience of the grace of God is in general agreement with the doctrine of Kenosis.

Beginning with experience we may use philosophy to explain the problem of the Incarnation and to correct extravagance, and then we may turn to the facts of history to verify our conclusions.

CHAPTER VII

THE GOSPEL MESSAGE - - - - - 221

The Gospels, whether considered as history or as interpretation, reveal an attractive personality.

The homage rendered to the Incarnate Christ is more than a mere aesthetic or intellectual appreciation; it stands

Contents

for a recognition of the possibility of a true communion between man and God.

Fellowship with God is a common element in all religious thought.

Two perils which beset the doctrine of union with God:

(i.) The Greek failure. The lack of Personality in the Platonic conception of the Good. (ii.) The Oriental failure. The lack of real existence in the world.

Both of these are avoided by the Christian doctrine of union with God in Jesus Christ.

Three lines of approach in the presentation of this doctrine. (i.) The dogmatic. Its limitations. (ii.) The historical. A possible weakening in authority. (iii.) The experimental.

The Ritschlian contribution—its dangers.

How may man enter into this experience?—Faith, the means to life.

Faith demands for its reasonable exercise both 'Jesus' and 'Christ.'

Union with God is the spring of the highest morality.

It is the true basis of all philanthropic service.

It makes possible the unity of the Christian Church.

It accounts for the rapture of the Saints of God.

This Fellowship of Eternal Life is revealed in and through Jesus Christ—the Gospel of the Grace of God.

INTRODUCTORY

THE Gospels are the records of the words and works of Christ, and these are the vehicles of revelation about the nature of God and His will in a degree to which no others can approximate, inasmuch as their author was one who was not, like the prophets of old, expressing truth about God of which He had become conscious, but was Himself the manifestation in human nature of the divine life.

REV. W. C. ALLEN, *Contentio Veritatis*, p. 240.

We may feel assured that the tradition as we have it is substantially accurate, but the Synoptics give us something better than a mere chronicle. They give us what a mere accurate collection of facts cannot yield, a true impression of Jesus. They are artists, and not chroniclers; but the art of the Synoptics is not the art of an individual, though there are individual touches enough to make each Gospel distinct. The art is chiefly the unconscious art of spiritual selection working in the community. In the course of the formation of the tradition those events and sayings were selected which were serviceable for the needs of the spirit and the demands of the life. We see Jesus, not indeed as He was in the entirety of His life—one half has not been told us—but as He was of value for the needs of the Church, as He inspired her faith and impelled her spirit.

E. E. ANDERSON.

The Christ of the Gospels

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTORY

THE word ‘Gospel’ is one of the most beautiful in all language. It has become familiar by reason of common use, and is now fraught with an infinite significance. But it is not a word which can be considered to be finally determinative. It may connote very different ideas. It may stand for a book or for its teaching. We may use it to describe God’s purpose for the human race, or to describe man’s attempt to record that purpose. Sometimes it is a vehicle; sometimes the diviner content. It may be to us the channel through which has flowed the river of the grace of God, or it may be that river itself, cleansing, refreshing, and quickening all that it touches. A modern writer has very happily differentiated the one use from the other. Dr. Du Bose speaks of ‘The Gospel in the Gospels,’ and we must always be careful to distinguish the one from the other. For the casket may be constructed of materials exposed to uncertainties of many sorts,

The Christ of the Gospels

but it may nevertheless contain and preserve for us a precious treasure, the pledge of a ransom for the race of man. Many anxious questions arise out of the relation of this vehicle to its content. The connexion between them cannot be ignored. The credentials of the one are to be found, at least in part, in the history of the other. To a certain extent the thought finds its guarantee in the circumstances attending the formation of the record. When we are considering the message we are bound to scrutinize the way in which it has come before our attention.

Thus our examination of the Gospels is of necessity twofold. We have to consider the purport of the message, but also the means by which it has been brought within the range of our consciousness.

Now the message meets us with a challenge the most august, the most important that has ever been presented to the human mind. It sets before us the history of a striking personality, and we are taught that that personality embodies the purpose of God for all mankind. We are taken behind the mere record of events, and we are asked to consider in the person of Jesus Christ the thought of God concerning man. ‘The Old Testament,’ Dr. Forsyth says,¹ ‘is valuable not as a history of Israel, nor as a history of religion, but as a history of revelation, of grace, of redemption. . . . The apostles do not so much give us Israel, as what God meant by Israel.’ Similar words may be used with equal truth of the

¹ *The Person and Place of Jesus Christ*, p. 169.

Introductory

New Testament records. They give us not so much the history of Jesus, as what God meant by Jesus. There is a measure of biography, but there is also an interpretation of the Person described.

In all biography two elements are constant—the history or record of work done, and the explanation of the underlying personality. They may be treated together or separately, but they certainly exist, and the one is essential to the delineation of the other. The activities of the man lack coherence, motive, and purpose unless we see behind his deeds and words an adequate personality; and the personality is lacking in definiteness and force unless it finds expression in work. Both of these elements are to be found in the Gospels. We have the record of deeds and words in the Synoptic Gospels; we have their significance in the Fourth. The experience of the one class is followed by the interpretation of the other. After that flash of illumination which came to them with the ascension of their Lord, and its promised sequel at Pentecost, the followers of Jesus remembered and understood. Words came back to them filled with a new significance. The Spirit brought to their remembrance whatsoever Jesus had said. That same Spirit took of that which was of the very nature of their Lord and revealed it unto them. Out of the common fact sprang the underlying spiritual: ‘This Jesus’ was seen to be ‘both Lord and Christ.’

The cardinal doctrine of the Christian faith is that of the Person of our Lord. The whole sum of man’s neediness, as well as the infinite provision which God

The Christ of the Gospels

has in Himself for meeting that need; all man's thought of God, and all God's thought of man; the divine purpose from all eternity, and the utmost destiny of the human race,—these things are all summed up in the doctrine of the Person of Christ. The unity of that Person, as that of the God-man in whom the divine and human natures meet, is set before us as the supreme truth of revelation. It lays a heavy burden upon the human mind, but it carries the weight of a gracious and eternal purpose, and it is charged with man's sublimest and ultimate hope. It gives us the essential truth in a final and comprehensive religion, because it brings together the two great concepts 'God' and 'Man,' and shows us that there may be after all a true relation between them. The gospel is no baffling antithesis in which we are presented now with the divine and now with an irreconcilable human. It is a synthesis the truest and the most sublime. It shows us God and Man as one in Jesus Christ.

In the pages which follow an attempt is made to consider this great gospel message not by laying down rules for dealing with the record, which by eliminating the transcendental really beg the whole question of that Person, nor again by considering only those things which correspond to what we find in other religious systems to the neglect of all those things which make it their fulfilment, but rather by considering as parts of one final revelation both history and interpretation. If it be found that there is no correspondence between the two, or if it appear

Introductory

that the history has no sufficient guarantee, then indeed we may have to consider whether we must not accept the sharply drawn division with which we are presented to-day, and proceed to take our several positions with the Jesus of the Synoptic Gospels or with the Christ of St. Paul.

But let us at the outset recognize what such separation means. In the one case our Lord is relegated to the position occupied by all leaders or heroes real or imaginary; in the other He becomes a figment of the mind of the most visionary of men, the mere extravagance of an emotional nature. If we accept the one, worship—the common instinct of the human race—is reduced to an aesthetic appreciation of an individual who lacks the necessary sanctions of Deity; and if we limit ourselves to the other, we impose upon ourselves the invention of a brain which some might say was diseased. If the two terms ‘Jesus’ and ‘Christ’ are to be taken as mutually exclusive, we must accept that the one lacks both finality and comprehensiveness in the sphere of religion, while the other is the conception, uncertain and unguaranteed, of a merely human mind.

Modern criticism, in so far as it may be described as destructive criticism, approaches this supremely important question along two very different lines. The position which our Lord occupies in the thought and worship of His followers is accounted for by the application of certain evolutionary principles which are found to be operative in human systems of

The Christ of the Gospels

religion. Those who follow this line account for Christianity much as they account for the apotheosis of Krishna. They conceive of the earliest Christian community as being attached to the Man Jesus by reason of the personal charm and the wisdom of a great teacher, and as being led after His death to a deification of their Master by reason of their reverence and superstition. The points of correspondence, many of them close and striking enough, between Christianity and other systems are pointed out. Such correspondence is said to lie not only in the sayings attributed to the central figure of the system, not only in the incidents related concerning Him, but also in the method by which the transition was made from the human—more or less heroic—to the divine, claiming and compelling both personal reverence and devotion and finally worship. But such correspondence as exists, instead of weakening the Christian position really strengthens it. It shows that Christianity is part of a world-movement in the sphere of religion, the centre and governing impulse of which is the only living and true God,¹ who ‘has not left Himself without witness among men,’ who ‘lighteneth every man coming into the world,’ who has spoken ‘in many parts and in many ways, and finally in His Son.’ This last revelation, then, will correspond with every broken light that may in other ages have made the darkness visible. This divine ‘Son’ will gather up into Himself, into one final and complete illumination, all that may be

¹ See Nolloth, *The Person of Our Lord*, pp. 286 ff.

Introductory

called 'light.' There will be correspondence, but there will be transcendence also. This is 'true light.'¹

The method in which the transcendental element in the person of Christ came to be recognized by the Church is of the greatest importance in this connexion. The order is the very reverse of that which is continually assumed. The Gospels were written to preserve for the Church the historic basis of a doctrine of Christ already recognized as transcending human limitations. It was not that some simple historic fact became sublimed in human thinking so that reverence passed into superstition until the miraculous obscured the human event, but rather that in a spiritual illumination it was seen and accepted that the tabernacle of God was already with men, and that He dwelt among them. That illumination gave unity and interpretation to all the experiences of three memorable years; it filled the disciples of Jesus with both confidence and hope; and this backward and forward reference knit into one great and powerful community of believers the separate and comparatively ineffectual individuals that had followed Jesus, until they 'turned the world upside down.'² They did not begin by sublimating

¹ The expression 'true Light' (1 John ii. 8) means not true as distinguished from false, but rather ideal, comprehensive, and all-inclusive. See Findlay, *Fellowship in the Life Eternal*, in loco.

² See Nolloth, *ut supra*, pp. 77, 217, 306; Denney, *Jesus and the Gospels*, p. 377; and Streatfeild, *The Incarnation*, p. 71.

The Christ of the Gospels

humanity; they were caught up into the all-embracing sweep of Deity. They allowed it to obliterate all long-established distinctions, both racial and religious. A new conception of the human society began to appear. They had all things in common. They dwelt in the consciousness of an immanent Deity, a divine Parousia, one day to be made evident to the world. The 'history,' on the other hand, sprang out of their new-found need to instruct those who, as time went on, began to attach themselves to the new community. It was the demands of the Gentile Church for something other than interpretation, which might be merely subjective after all, that led to the recording of memories too precious to be lost. And so St. Mark wrote down his memoirs of St. Peter's preaching, and St. Matthew drew up his collection of priceless sayings, and St. John

Patient stated much of the Lord's life
Forgotten or misdelivered, and let it work.¹

But it was the transcendental that came first in the consciousness of the Church.² The history as recorded was an afterthought, made necessary in the progress of events. We have at least four letters written by St. Paul which have received universal acceptance as genuine. But the Christ presented in these very early documents is no human being, passing in the twilight of man's fading recollection into divine or semi-divine authority. Whether we consider the

¹ Browning, *A Death in the Desert*.

² Forsyth, op. cit. p. 323.

Introductory

Epistles to the Thessalonians or that to the Galatians to be the earliest of his writings, Christ is presented in each as already invested with divine honour and authority, and this in the thought of one who had shown himself to be a bigoted upholder of that Judaism to which the thought of more than one God was anathema. There is only one possible cause for such an effect.¹ If we accept as genuine the speeches of St. Peter as given in the Acts of the Apostles—and there is no reason why we should not do so—we come upon the same thing. That with which the Christian Church starts is the transcendental Christ. We need time for the mythical process to bring about the apotheosis common in other systems. Here the apotheosis springs into completeness from the first. The only sufficient explanation of the fact is that Jesus had been ‘declared Son of God in power by His resurrection from the dead.’

The other side from which criticism approaches the question before us is that of a critical study of the record. We are told² that

‘We must submit the material transmitted in the Gospel to a careful sifting even in the case of the earliest Evangelists. The first process in this sifting is the getting behind the later writings to their sources. St. Matthew and St. Luke are dependent upon St. Mark, and in their records of sayings upon another source containing utterances of our Lord, and these must be considered.’

¹ Matheson, *John's Portrait of Christ*, p. 44.

² Arnold Meyer, *Jesus or Paul*, p. 63.

The Christ of the Gospels

No exception can be taken to this; but we are not to stop there:

‘General considerations must come into play even in dealing with our earliest accessible sources. They are set in a miraculous narrative. The early Christians in their enthusiastic love and their joyous faith in the miraculous were disposed to a steady accumulation of miracle, and were prone to see in the miraculous element that which was essential and divine in Jesus.’

So this sifting process really means the removal from the record of everything that appears to savour of the miraculous. However authentic it may be, it is sufficient for its rejection that it bears the mark of the miraculous. Such criticism is really based upon the familiar axiom that ‘Miracles are impossible.’ It is sufficient for our present purpose to claim that such a statement is no axiom, but rather the negation of the proposition. That proposition is that once at least the miracle of miracles did take place, and Deity, personal Deity, tabernacled in human flesh, the entirely divine becoming entirely human. To lay down as axiomatic the negation of all miracle is to foreclose this all-important question. Criticism of this kind starts with a theory and makes the facts fit in as best they may, at the cost of much paring and shaping, and even by the summary and arbitrary rejection of those that prove refractory.¹ It seeks to differentiate between the human and the divine in a gospel which is no gospel unless it contains them both.

¹ See Nolloth, op. cit. pp. 346 ff.

Introductory

It would distinguish between the historic object and the subjective interpretation. Too often it does so by denying one or other of the two great terms with which it deals. It presents us with the historic Jesus at the expense of the spiritual Christ. In its concentration upon the one it either ignores the other, or rejects as an unnecessary intrusion any appearance it may make upon what it considers to be the one and only plane of investigation. Its methods are unjust, and they are doomed to failure. The metaphysical refuses to be excluded. There is a worthy subjectivity which forces itself upon the objective with which we deal. No recorded fact can be separated from the subjective interpretation in which it is presented to us. Here the thing in itself does not exist apart from the mind that receives the conception. An experience is a fact as realized by a thinking subject; that subject is affected by it; a certain reaction follows in the recording mind; interpretation follows; and we cannot state the fact without the accompanying interpretation. We cannot admit either that the historic is missing from the teaching of St. Paul, or that the transcendental is lacking in the Synoptic Gospels. To pit these two writings against one another, to claim that they are antithetic, and then to call upon the world to choose between them, is the falsest of all issues. There is a higher synthesis which finds room for both 'Jesus' and 'Christ,' and this synthesis is the very heart of the Gospels.

Nor must such a synthesis be ruled out as

The Christ of the Gospels

inadmissible on the ground that it is apostolical. After all, the early Church was in a far better position for judging whether it was admissible or not than we can ever hope to be, and we find that the testimony of that Church is given without hesitation. To it had been given in the experience of its first teachers that which silenced all questions as to whether it was possible or not that the two terms 'Jesus' and 'Christ' referred to one Person, and that Person One who possessed a definite historical position as well as a divine significance. The question whether it was so or not never seems to have been raised in the days when experience was immediate and conclusive. There was a sharp division of opinion as to the authority of the Mosaic statutes in the Church, whether they were or were not binding upon all its members. The Church was almost rent in two by a question concerning the particular day upon which our Lord celebrated the last Paschal Feast. But there is no suggestion of any conflict of opinion as to whether Jesus did or did not rise from the dead; and in the light of that fact it is claimed from the earliest days that He was both Lord and Christ, that is to say, that He was both divine in Himself and that He fulfilled all that Jews had hoped to find in their Messiah.¹

¹ The title 'lord,' *Kύπειος*, is used both by St. Peter and frequently by St. Paul, together with the names 'Jesus' and 'Christ,' in the same way as in the LXX it is used of God. Dalman says (*Words of Jesus*, p. 329): 'As soon as Jesus entered into His state of kingly majesty, it

Introductory

This was received as a matter of common acceptance. It was the experience which interpreted all that had taken place before. It was confidently appealed to, and as readily allowed. The Church of that day was not rent by Christological controversy, as it was in after days, when the appeal to experience as a matter of history had, in the natural order of things, become impossible. The resurrection of our Lord had led the Church to a brilliant, an inevitable, and a final interpretation. We have seen that there can be no revelation without interpretation, and it is worth while noticing here that the apostles claim the power to interpret. In a remarkable passage (1 Cor. ii. 1) St. Paul, speaking of the ‘mystery,’ or according to some texts the ‘testimony,’ of God, declares that this is to be found in Jesus Christ and Him crucified.¹ He then proceeds to show that in this matter discrimination is the product of a spiritual endowment. It is hidden from the

became among His followers an acknowledgement of sovereignty; and when they addressed Him as the Son of God, then “Our Lord” was not widely separated from the same designation for God. But it must be remembered that the Aramaic-speaking Jews did not, save exceptionally, designate God as “Lord”; so that in the Hebraist section of the Jewish Christians the expression “our Lord” was used in reference to Jesus only, and would be quite free from ambiguity. But Hellenists had, and used frequently, the term as a designation for God.’

¹The collocation of these terms is of importance as indicating the side from which the interpretation of the Person of Christ is approached. It is Christ as a Mediatorial Person, in whom God’s meaning and God’s witness alike are to be found.

The Christ of the Gospels

'natural man'—that is, the man by whom the gift beyond all natural endowment has not yet been realized. The qualified man is called ὁ πνευματικός, by which we understand, not the spiritually-minded man, but the man whose spirit has become permeated and transformed by the indwelling Spirit of God.¹ 'Such a man,' says the apostle, 'judges all things.' He is, that is to say, in a position to make the necessary distinctions which enable him to distinguish Christ as the innermost secret of the divine mind, the 'mystery' hid from all ages but now declared in Christ. In the closing verse of the section he claims that they, the apostolic teachers of the Church, possess the mind, the intellect, the discriminating power of Christ Himself.² The apostolic Church was a sharer in Christ's certainty about Himself. And this claim to discriminating, that is to interpreting, power was in accordance with the

¹ See T. C. Edwards, *in loco*.

² 'The apostle's reasoning rests upon an unexpressed assumption that Christ has the mind of God—the assumption, in fact, which Arius denied in asserting that the Son could not investigate the Father's nature. God's judgement is absolutely true and final; Christ has the divine comprehension; we again have the moral judgement of Christ; therefore the spiritual man judges all things, and from his judgement there is no appeal.'—T. C. EDWARDS.

So also Dr. Fairbairn, *The Philosophy of the Christian Religion*, p. 474: 'How are we to conceive the genesis of this common and creative idea of the New Testament (i.e. the divinity of Christ), this constitutive and regulative idea of the Church? Its source must have been one acknowledged and revered by all tendencies and all parties, for only so can their agreement in this and their difference in other

Introductory

direct promise of their Lord.¹ ‘The Comforter, even the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He shall teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I have said unto you. He shall bear witness of Me. He shall glorify Me, for He shall take of that which is Mine and shall reveal it unto you’ (John xvi. 14).²

In the words of the Athanasian Creed, ‘Our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is both God and Man; God, of the substance of the Father, begotten before the world; and man of the substance of His Mother, born in the world; perfect God and perfect Man.’ If we inquire what led to this historic statement, we shall put aside whatever may be due to the action of the sub-apostolic Church feeling after a complete statement of the truth which had been inwrought into its own spiritual life, and endeavouring to find a formula for that in which it had found life itself. It is no wonder that the very attempt to formulate the Creed raised a host of angry protests against every statement that was made by the Church. But

respects be understood. And this source could be but one, the mind of Christ. His teaching can explain the rise, the form, and the contents of the Apostolic literature. The literature could never explain how His teaching came to be. Postulate His mind, and we may derive from it the Apostolic thought; but postulate this thought, and we could never deduce from it His mind and history.’

¹ So Streatfeild, op. cit. pp. 69, 70.

² The word *δοξάζειν*, ‘glorify,’ means to declare the inner nature or meaning. The attributive pronoun used here indicates more than mere possession. It might almost be rendered, ‘that which is my very self.’

The Christ of the Gospels

we are not concerned here with the efforts of the Church, nor with the degree of success it attained. Our investigation is with the Records upon which the Church has been built up. What is the doctrine of the Person of our Lord which is given to us in the New Testament? How did it come to find a place in those writings? The double question calls for at least an outline statement from the writings as a whole, and then for some measure of historical criticism of the Four Gospels. When we have thus considered the Records, it may be possible to build up from the writings such a statement of our Lord's Person as will present Him once again to His Church as the one true object of her adoration ; the God-Man, in fellowship with whom a man may find the very fullness of his life.

THE CHRISTOLOGY OF THE NEW
TESTAMENT

THE subject upon which Christological speculation exercises itself so painfully is Christ as experienced by other people in the past; St. Paul's contemplation of Christ proceeds from his own experience of Christ, and is nourished by the spiritual strength of the present Christ. Doctrinaire Christology looks backward into history as if under some spell; St. Paul's contemplation of Christ gazes clear-eyed into the future. Christology stands brooding beside an empty grave; St. Paul sees piercingly into a heaven full of the living Presence.

DEISSMANN, *Light from the Ancient East*, p. 288.

CHAPTER II

THE CHRISTOLOGY OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

THE Christology of the New Testament which stands outside of the Synoptic Gospels and the Johannine writings may be divided into three main sections. We may study it as it is set forth in the Epistle to the Hebrews, then in the writings of St. Paul, and last of all in the teaching of St. Peter, as that has been given to us in the letter which bears his name, and in the speeches attributed to the apostle in the Book of the Acts of the Apostles. We shall take these sections in this order because in seeking the source or sources of the Gospel Message we must begin with the latest and most fully developed statement, and while the Epistle to the Hebrews is furthest removed in time, the speeches recorded in the early chapters of the Acts of the Apostles are nearest to the historical facts contained in the Gospel documents. It is generally accepted by the majority of English scholars that the Epistle to the Hebrews was written about the year A.D. 70.¹ If we accept this, then within forty years of the death of our Lord there appeared a notable piece of literature containing an impressive interpretation of the fact of Christ. No attempt is made to prove the

¹ So Drs. Bruce, Westcott, Findlay, Ramsay, &c. German scholars, however, assign the Epistle to a later date.

The Christ of the Gospels

truth of the facts on which this presentation rests, and we do not find that the statements made raised any question as to the facts. Now forty years is a very brief period to allow for the operation of the 'mythic process.' We need far more than forty years when that man is one of such lowly origin as is indicated by birth into the family of a village carpenter. Yet this letter shows us Jews, who have fiercely resented all attempts on the part of men to make themselves equal with God, or to assume a position of privilege within sacred precincts, both making and allowing the fullest claim to Deity on behalf of Jesus of Nazareth. Nor was the opinion lightly held. Those who accepted it were exhorted to resist unto blood any attempt to rob them of that which placed upon the firm basis of historic fact the spiritual endowment which they had experienced. To that appeal they responded to the full. 'They were tortured, not accepting deliverance; they were stoned; they were sawn asunder; they were tempted; they were slain with the sword' (Heb. xi. 37). The conviction must have been firmly held that the facts upon which this appeal was made were true.

The central theme of the Epistle is—to use a memorable sentence of St. Paul's—'the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal' (2 Cor. iv. 18) The contrast is drawn between the spiritual and the material, between the heavenly type seen 'in the mount' and the earthly antitype set forth in temple, priest, and ritual. The revealer of this 'abiding City'

Christology of the New Testament

'eternal in the heavens' is One who is set before us as the meaning and purpose, the true interpretation and the fulfilling end, of all that was of truth and beauty in the system then passing to its dissolution in the great cataclysm close upon the city of Jerusalem. But He is something more than a mere figment of the imagination or ideal of the human mind. He is God's last word to a world to which He has spoken in types and figures without end. He is the Creator of the universe, and the world to come is put in subjection to Him. He is the 'effulgence' of the glory of God, and the expression of the divine essence. He differs from angels, lawgivers, and priests in one great particular which puts Him far above them in authority and in actual effective power. He is clothed with 'the power of indissoluble life,' and the sacrifice which He accomplishes is a spiritual sacrifice offered once and for all that draw nigh to God through Him. When we ask who this Person may be, we are told that He is 'One who is Son'—Son of God.

There is much in such language at which we must look more closely. To begin with the last term used, the word 'Son' means much more than we find expressed in either of our two English Versions. The original does not mean either 'His Son' as we have it in the Authorized Version, nor exactly 'A Son' as it is rendered in the margin of the Revised Version. The word stands without any article or other attribute in the Greek Text, and grammarians assure us that in such cases we are presented with no

The Christ of the Gospels

title, or other form for identifying an individual, but with characterization. They put before us the nature or character of the person to whom reference is made.

'The word expresses not merely a moral relation, but a relation of being, and defines in human language that which was beyond time immanent in the Godhead, while the anarthrous use of it emphasizes the essential nature of the relation which it expresses.'¹

'Sonship taken in a diluted sense will not bear the argumentative stress laid upon it in this Epistle. It must be taken in a unique sense; not in a sense common to Christ with men and angels, or even in a sense applicable to the epoch-making characters of history. Why should Sonship make Christ greater than the prophets as agents of revelation, unless it be of such a character as to involve absolute likeness of nature and perfect intimate fellowship? . . . The Son appears for God in the creation and preservation of the world. To all intents and purposes this means that the Son is a divine Being, the active Deity of the universe. The presumption is that He is an eternal Being, a Son from all eternity, as well as for evermore.'²

In the third verse of the first chapter the same idea of an absolute as distinguished from an assumed relation appears again, and in this connexion every word is significant. If the relation between the

¹ Westcott, *Epistle to the Hebrews*, p. 425.

² Dr. A. B. Bruce, Article in *Hastings' Bible Dictionary*, vol. ii., p. 329.

Christology of the New Testament

Father and the Son had been entered upon in time either really or for purposes of accommodation, we should have read either ‘becoming’ or ‘being made the effulgence of His glory.’ But the word used shows that the relation was not one of mere adoption. Still less was the Sonship temporary or limited during the period of the Incarnation. Permanent essence is predicated of this Sonship. The words which follow—‘the effulgence of His glory’—are words the importance of which it is difficult to over-estimate. To what extent they are derived from technical terms in Alexandrian Schools we need not here inquire. Whatever their origin, the writer of this Epistle found that they expressed the relation in which, in his opinion, an historic Person stood to God and the world. ‘Effulgence,’ or ‘radiance,’ is the manifestation of the ‘Light’ which God is. It is the ‘Light of Light’ with which we are familiar in the Nicene Creed.

‘The metaphor expresses the derivation of the Son from the Father, and His distinction from Him, under the figure of the radiance which streams forth from a body of light, and gains an independent existence of its own.’¹

At the same time it is not considered as existing apart; it ever suggests its source. Its independent existence does not imply isolation.

But this effulgence is the effulgence of ‘glory,’ and the latter word is no less important. Its Greek

¹ Professor A. S. Peake, *Commentary on the Epistle to the Hebrews*, p. 76.

The Christ of the Gospels

original has a special use in the New Testament derived from its application in the Septuagint to the Hebrew word used to express the Shechinah or visible brightness radiating from the presence of God. Then by an easy transition it came to be used for the divine perfections. In classical Greek the word stands for ‘opinion,’ and if this last may be taken for what an expressed opinion ought to be—the revelation of self—we can see how the same word arrived at its New Testament meaning. The glory of God is no adventitious splendour; it is no light surrounding Him but detachable from Him. It is God as revealed. Whenever God is revealed in majesty, in goodness, or in truth, we see His glory; and to recognize this in homage or in obedience is to glorify God.

In this all-important statement which we are considering, every word is of importance, and we notice that the phrase ‘The very image of this substance’ fully maintains the high level of thought which we have been considering. The former of the two expressions has been transplanted bodily into English in the word ‘character.’ Originally the impression cut on a seal or die, it has come to stand for that which represents by corresponding signs some less concrete original. We recognize the latter by the impression made upon us by the former. ‘It is a primary and not a secondary source of knowledge.’¹ The second word has been rendered ‘Person,’ but this translation is open to much mis-

¹ Professor Peake, *ut supra*.

Christology of the New Testament

understanding, and a far better rendering is that of the Revised Version, provided that we give to the word ‘ substance ’ its proper etymological meaning. This is that which ‘ stands under ’ something else. It is ‘ the underlying reality of a thing, the qualities which constitute it what it is.’ In this sense the word stands more exactly for what we mean by ‘ essence.’

It has been necessary for our purpose thus briefly to dwell upon the exact meaning of the expressions used in this passage; and when we gather up the teaching of the whole we can see that it presents us, within the natural limitations imposed by forms of speech, with a striking declaration with regard to the Person of this Divine Son. He is a revelation of God Himself, but essentially one with the Father. He proceeds from the Father and is the exact counterpart of Him. It would be difficult to find words which could more fully put before us the idea of one who is distinct in individuality yet one in essence. Complete revelation, yet essential divinity—these are the two notes of this great passage.¹

¹ ‘ The Sabellians laid stress on the “ effulgence ” as suggesting the idea of a model manifestation rather than of a distinct personality. The Arians, on the other hand, emphasized the term “ substance ” as implying a position of subordination, or dependence belonging to the Son in relation to the Father. The orthodox, on their side, maintained that by the combination of the two both errors were excluded; the former phrase implying identity of nature, so excluding Arianism, the latter implying independent personality, so excluding Sabellianism.’ Dr. A. B. Bruce, *The Expositor*, iii., 7, p. 349.

The Christ of the Gospels

The Epistle goes on to say that this same Son bears the weight of the world's destiny. He is the one absolute Redeemer, and the enthroned representative of humanity. He is greater than angels and greater than Moses, whose authority He far transcends. He leads His people into a rest beyond that which Joshua held out to Israel. His functions as Priest are not less impressive than His functions as King. His priesthood is eternal, and the sacrifice He offers is a spiritual sacrifice, seen in His own perfect submission to the Father's will. The whole ceremonial of the temple service pointed to Him. He is the divine fulfilment of what were mere shadows of things to come. But in the midst of this delineation of one who in being and in function alike goes far beyond the human, the writer introduces an assertion that this Divine Son was nevertheless a man. He was 'made like unto His brethren,' 'taking hold of the seed of Abraham.' He is one who 'is touched with the feeling of our infirmity,' and 'was tempted in all things like as we are.' Human characteristics appear even in His fulfilment of the requirements of the Messianic priesthood. 'He glorified not Himself to be made a high-priest.' His humiliation and obedience were fully proved when in Gethsemane He offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto Him that was able to save Him from death. In that mysterious hour of agony the writer sees One who proved Himself by obedience to the divine will worthy to become the author of eternal

Christology of the New Testament

salvation to all them that obey Him. To these He thus becomes the 'Captain,' one with those whom He leads, yet a true leader, made perfect through sufferings. Through Him there has come into the world a mighty spiritual force, opening up a new and living way, admitting men into a complete spiritual fellowship by faith, of which He is both the author and the finisher. This Person is no other than He who was known in history by the name of 'Jesus.'

Now whatever else such writing may reveal, it undoubtedly presents us with the paradox which is for ever connected with the Person of our Lord. Wholly human, He is also divine. The one presentation is as complete as the other, and it is given to the world within a period of time covered in a single generation.

If we ask whether there are any links connecting this statement concerning our Lord's Person with the facts of the gospel story, we find a series of letters written by St. Paul, and these are peculiarly rich in the same Christological teaching. So full are they that many ascribe to this writer the deification of Jesus, and call upon us to acknowledge the widest possible breach between the Pauline presentation of Christ and the facts recorded in the Gospels concerning Him. We shall find that the Pauline testimony is in reality based upon the very history which such critics fail to discover. But whatever may be discovered in the teaching, it is impossible to account for the history of the man himself apart from the

The Christ of the Gospels

facts of the existence of Jesus and of His manifestation to him in the risen and ascended Christ. Converted, as is now generally accepted, in the very year of our Lord's crucifixion, he is changed in a moment from the determined persecutor of all confessing the Christian faith into the most ardent and devoted advocate of the same faith, and he accounts for his change of attitude on the ground of an appearance to himself of Christ in glory.¹ All that counted for worth in his former life and training he now regarded as mere 'dung and dross' if only he might enter into personal fellowship with Christ. He regards the historic Jesus as One who was found in the 'form' of God, and who by an act of self-renunciation 'emptied Himself and took upon Him the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men; and being found in fashion as a man He humbled Himself, becoming obedient unto death, yea the death of the cross' (Phil. ii. 6). It is impossible to mistake St. Paul's meaning in this often quoted passage. It plainly implies both divinity and humanity in Jesus. It does not argue, but states as generally accepted facts, the divine pre-existence, the human condition, and finally the death of Jesus. 'As concerning the flesh He is of

¹ It has been urged by some that the word used to express appearance really implies a merely visionary appearance, and might therefore suggest that St. Paul was the victim of hallucination. An examination, however, of the different passages in which it appears shows that the word is used of the supernatural yet real appearance of both things and persons. See Matt. xvii. 3, Acts xiii. 31, 1 Tim. iii. 16.

Christology of the New Testament

the patriarchs, but in Himself He is God blessed for ever' (Rom. ix. 5). There is good reason for believing that in one passage (Col. ii. 3) the true reading directly gives to Christ the name 'God,' but even if we do not press the reading of the Vatican MS. in this passage, we find that elsewhere St. Paul speaks of our Lord as 'the image of God' (Col. i. 15),¹ by which we understand not merely that which resembles its original but also that which represents and is a visible manifestation of it. In Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead in bodily form.

This same Christ is the great agent in creation. 'He is Lord of all' (Acts x. 36). 'In Him all things hold together' (Col. i. 17). 'Through Him are all things, and we through Him' (1 Cor. viii. 6). 'Of Him, and through Him, and unto Him, are all things' (Rom. xi. 36). Not less impressive is the description of His relation to the souls of men.

¹ Readers of the Greek Testament will not need to be reminded that when St. Paul speaks of 'the form of God' and of 'the form of a slave' he uses a word (*μορφή*) which suggests the essential and permanent nature of that which is expressed. When on the other hand he speaks of 'the fashion of a man' he uses another word (*δημόσια*) which carries the idea of an external and transient configuration. See Lightfoot, *in loco*.

It is noteworthy, too, when he speaks of the divinity the verb used brings before us original and permanent existence, but when he refers to the humanity, he speaks of our Lord as of one who 'became' *ἐν δημόσιᾳ ἀνθρώπων γενόμενος*, in fashion as a man. The word 'image' (*εἰκών*) carries the ideas of likeness, representation, and manifestation. See Lightfoot, *in loco*.

The Christ of the Gospels

St. Paul speaks of Christ living in him. He agonizes that Christ may be formed in the members of the Church. Christ is a life-giving spirit. Fellowship with Him transforms men into His image; and in an intimate spiritual communion with Him man receives pardon, realizes his own personal redemption, and enters into that peace which is truest union with God. We have taken these references from the whole range of Pauline literature, but if we confine our attention to those four epistles which are all but universally accepted as genuine, the doctrine of Christ's Person which belongs to them is scarcely less impressive. The trend of modern criticism seems to be in the direction of giving the first place in order of time to the Epistle to the Galatians. In this case that epistle must have been written as early as A.D. 48. That is to say, within fifteen years of the crucifixion of our Lord St. Paul speaks of Him, without one word of explanation or of argument to support the tremendous claim, as 'Our Lord Jesus Christ, who gave Himself for our sins, that He might deliver us out of this present evil world' (Gal. i. 3, 4). This sentence alone contains a far-reaching Christology. The word LORD is the equivalent of the Jehovah of the Old Testament. 'Jesus' is the name of the historic person so called, while 'Christ' is the word which endows Him with Messianic dignities, and confers upon Him the power and glory of the theocratic King.

But the passage carries us further still. It con-

Christology of the New Testament

tains a statement of redemptive purpose and of evangelical experience. This divine-human Person died that He might save men from their sins, and men test the great statement by their own spiritual experience.

The tenor and purpose of the epistle are nobly Christological. It conceives of Christ as superseding the whole Mosaic system, the object of such unbounded reverence to a Jew. In Rabbinical schools St. Paul must often have vindicated it with the same vehement enthusiasm with which he afterwards insisted on the claims of Christ. That venerable system is here shown to be only an intermediary. It is a 'school-servant'; one whose function is discharged when he has brought the children committed to his care to Him who is the end of the Law, and admitted them into that perfect law of liberty for which Christ stands. Such a position implies the complete subversion of all Rabbinical teaching; and that St. Paul should accept and advocate teaching so contrary to that which commanded the allegiance of all his past, will remain an inexplicable enigma from the point of view of the apostle's psychology, unless we accept that which he himself puts forward as the sufficient, the compelling, cause of such a complete conversion.

The epistle, however, does not stop at the point of denying the finality of the law as law. The perils of Antinomianism threatened the Church the moment he advanced his proposition. It seemed as if he had removed all moral sanctions when he said that

The Christ of the Gospels

the law was introduced as a kind of parenthesis in the enunciation of the divine scheme, a something brought in and intended to run side by side with the general tenor of human life, until it should be lost in that righteousness of God which it could never confer or create of itself (Rom. v. 20). And so in this epistle St. Paul goes on to find the sanctions, which his enemies said he had destroyed, in the Person of Christ Himself. Alike in the world of morals and in that which lies so near that it can scarcely be separated, the obligations of our common humanity, St. Paul finds his law in Christ (Gal. vi. 2).

There issues, then, from such far-reaching conceptions the vision of nothing less than ‘life’; and when we ask what are the means by which man may enter into this life, we are brought to what is the climax of all the apostle’s teaching—an act of self-surrender admitting man to a spiritual fellowship with Christ so close, so intimate, that language fails to supply the necessary form, and in the unique mintage of this mind—God-taught, if human mind was ever inspired—the great phrase is struck, and man may find his life ‘*in Christ.*’ In the spiritual realm of such communion the barriers which bound our several individualities are obliterated. ‘There can be neither Jew nor Greek; there can be neither bond nor free; there can be neither male nor female.’ The Christian is in Christ; it is equally true that Christ is in him. In the new relationship which this self-committal confers, the change induced is so great

Christology of the New Testament

that it can only be spoken of in terms of regeneration, and if 'any man be in Christ he is a new creation: old things are passed away, and all things are become new' (2 Cor. v. 17).

It is clear that in such an argument the great centre around which all thoughts and conceptions gather is the Person of Christ. It is equally clear that nothing short of Deity as the dominant note in this presentation can either justify the claims made on behalf of this Person, or offer any hope of fulfilling the promise which it holds out to man. Yet with that note of Deity there is sounded another note, that of a true humanity. The human relation of Jesus to His mother is declared in words which safeguard the metaphysical, while they indicate the human, relationship. 'In the fullness of time,' we read, 'God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law.' The language is significant. It has often been pointed out that, while the true Greek equivalent of our English 'born of a woman' is not unknown in Scripture,¹ St. Paul here uses a word which is more accurately rendered 'coming into existence,' 'becoming' the Son of His human mother, and 'becoming,' too, a 'Son of the law.' In such carefully chosen words we must see that there are present to the apostle's mind, not only the story of the wonderful birth, but also the facts of Christ's presentation in the Temple and of His circumcision.

The crucifixion is mentioned in three notable

¹ See Knowling, *Testimony of St. Paul to Christ*, pp. 262-313.

The Christ of the Gospels

passages. In the first (ii. 20) St. Paul connects it, it is true, with his own spiritual experience, but this does not for a moment minimize or obscure the historic fact. If in expounding the passage we dwell upon the transcendental experience of the apostle, it is certain that his description of that experience would have lost all point if the Christ of whom he speaks had not been actually crucified. Metaphor passes beyond its rightful limits if a transcendental Christ without any objective and physical relation is spoken of as 'crucified.' The objectivity of the cross is still more plainly put before us in iii. 13, where the apostle speaks of the curse that falls upon 'him that hangeth on a tree.' There is no meaning in his reference to the Old Testament Scripture unless we accept, what he considers to be beyond dispute, that this same Christ who redeems 'from the curse of law' was once 'nailed to the accursed tree.' In the third passage there is the same vividness of reference put before us in an expression which tells us that while in these letters the apostle may for obvious purposes confine his attention to the more spiritual and transcendental relationships established by the risen and glorified Christ, he nevertheless in his public ministry was accustomed to dwell upon those objective facts which formed the stable basis of his later appeals. In iii. 1 he speaks of Jesus Christ as one who had been 'openly set forth crucified' before the people of Galatia. The apostle by his choice of words implies that when he first came among the

Christology of the New Testament

Galatian people he had so described the crucifixion of our Lord that the whole scene had been vividly presented to his hearers. It is difficult to see how those who deny the objective basis of St. Paul's teaching can set aside such a statement as this passage conveys.

We have considered the Christology of the Epistle to the Galatians in some detail because it is one of those epistles the Pauline authorship of which is beyond dispute. We do not purpose to consider the teaching of the other epistles of the same group in the same detail. The Epistles to the Corinthians and that to the Romans are rich in such teaching, but we shall examine only one typical passage in each. St. Paul says of our Lord (Rom. i. 3) that He 'was born of the seed of David according to the flesh,' and that He was 'determined'—or designated—'Son of God by a resurrection such as that when dead persons rise.' Here again the phraseology is peculiar and striking. But it is definite enough to present us with the two elements which we have discovered already in both the Epistle to the Hebrews and the Epistle to the Galatians. He is represented as being both human and divine. The Jesus of history and the Christ of faith are included within the single personality. In speaking of His birth the apostle uses again the word which he uses in the Epistle to the Galatians.¹ As a human being

¹ γενομένου. This is contrasted with ὅρισθέντος, γενομένου denoting, as usually, transition from one state or mode of subsistence to another; it is rightly paraphrased '(who) was born,' and is practically equivalent to the Johannean ἐλθόντος εἰς τὸν κόσμον.

The Christ of the Gospels

He derived His origin from David, but the passing into the mundane state of being is described as not a ‘being born’ but rather a ‘becoming.’ When, however, the writer declares His divine Sonship, quite another word is significantly used. In so far as the transcendental relations of the Father to the Son are addressed to the understanding of men, He neither ‘became’ nor ‘was made.’¹ The apostle is careful to say that he was ‘designated’ or definitely declared to be what He already was, ‘Son of God.’

This designation is connected with a definite historical event, that of the resurrection. The phrase is peculiar. St. Paul does not say ‘by the resurrection of a dead man,’ nor does he say ‘by a resurrection from among those that are dead.’ In the Greek the two words ‘really coalesce, obtaining the force of a compound word, by a dead-rising, a resurrection such as that when dead persons rise.’² By this supreme occurrence, then, our Lord was not endowed with something which did not belong to Him before; He did not *become* Son of God, but He was definitely declared to be One already endowed with Sonship. The relation pre-

¹ In his Article on ‘The Acts of the Apostles’ in the *Dictionary of Christ and the Gospels*, Dr. J. Weiss strangely misquotes this passage, and speaks of the apostle as holding fast to the notion that ‘Jesus *became* Son of God in power through the resurrection from the dead.’ Not only does he ignore St. Paul’s word *ōpiσθέντος*, but he is also wrong in connecting the phrase ‘in power’ with ‘Son of God.’ The whole phrase should be rendered ‘Declared with power to be Son of God.’ See Sanday and Headlam, *in loco*.

² Sanday and Headlam, *ut supra*.

Christology of the New Testament

viously realized by Him was now established in the consciousness of men. The pre-existent Sonship was endorsed and proclaimed in an exhibition of divine power by the fact of the resurrection. Again, in speaking of the Sonship of our Lord the writer uses the language which we have already found in the Epistle to the Hebrews. The absence of the article from the word 'Son' shows us that the apostle is not designating an individual by that title. Such designation is made in the verse immediately preceding that which is now before us. But here he tells us that the resurrection established in the knowledge and experience of men the fact that there was existing between the divine Father and this descendant of David such a relation as that which exists between a father and a son.

We find, then, in this passage also the two great terms which we have already discovered in the New Testament presentation of Our Lord's Person. On one side a full humanity is allowed, and on the other a divinity supported by an appeal to experience. The appeal to history is direct and clear. Remove the fact of the resurrection, and St. Paul's contention falls to the ground. The latter was written within twenty-five years of the crucifixion of Jesus, when there were many in a position to deny the fact, yet the fact is stated without hesitation or argument as one not open to dispute.

The Epistles to the Corinthians contain a very full description of the significance of Christ's Person for the world. The cosmic aspect of the Incarnation

The Christ of the Gospels

is developed in later epistles such as those to the Colossians and the Ephesians, but in these earlier writings there are anticipations, after St. Paul's manner, of that which was more fully developed afterwards. He shows how Christ is for those who are being saved both the power of God and the wisdom of God. We shall select one passage out of many dealing with this particular aspect of the significance of Christ to the Church. It is that in which St. Paul acknowledges the spiritual endowment of those to whom he writes. There is an obvious reference to the teaching of the Gnostics, but a distinct claim that in Christ believers receive far more than Gnosticism has to offer. He says (1 Cor. i. 4-5): 'I thank my God always for the grace of God which was given you in Christ Jesus; that in everything ye were enriched in Him in all utterance and all knowledge, even as the testimony of Christ was confirmed in you.' Their fellowship with Christ had brought them a great spiritual enrichment—the gift not only of utterance but also of knowledge or discernment. But the cause of this was that the testimony concerning the Christ had taken root and become established in their hearts. There had been a witness then. It related to One whom they had come to accept as the Messiah, the hope of their race. This Person had been set forth before them as He had been set forth before the Galatians. His testimony had taken firm hold of their conviction, and in consequence spiritual gifts had enriched their lives. Just as elsewhere the

Christology of the New Testament

writer refers the transcendental fact of Christ to the historic presentation, so here the spiritual experience is related to the historical fact. The personal experiences so full, so far transcending all natural causes as to tempt the Church to ascribe them to spiritual agencies and demoniac powers of Gnostic teaching, were related to their own Messianic anticipations fulfilled, as the apostle himself had borne witness, in Jesus Christ. The spiritual apprehension is bound up with the historical presentation. To account for the one apart from the other is impossible.

It is evident from such passages as we have been considering that to St. Paul the Incarnation meant the union of two natures human and divine. This view is increasingly emphasized in the apostle's later writings, and it would be easy to multiply passages so full of the same rich teaching that the reader is lost in an ever-deepening vision of the thought of God for mankind in Jesus Christ His Son. It is, however, unnecessary to increase the number of such passages. For we are concerned here with tracing back to its source in the Gospels that conception of the Person of Christ upon which the Christian faith may be said to rest. Upon that foundation rests the whole superstructure of the Christian Church, and it is a question of first importance whether the formulated teaching of the New Testament has a sufficient basis in the historical record of that Word which was made flesh and tabernacled among us.

The Christ of the Gospels

Between the formulated doctrine of St. Paul and the Gospel story stand the all-important declarations made by St. Peter and others, and recorded in the opening chapters of the Acts of the Apostles. Can these speeches be guaranteed? How came they before the notice of the Good Physician whom we know by the name of Luke? These are questions of great interest and of some difficulty. But we shall not enter into them here. We accept the conclusions of those who may be said to have fairly established the point that they form part of the Memoirs of the teaching of St. Peter. These were probably recorded by St. Mark, and would come into the possession of St. Luke just as the other part of St. Mark's writing embodied for us in the Markan section of the third Gospel. To these Petrine statements we may add that which we have in the First Epistle of St. Peter. The correspondence between the two writings is very close; so much so that from one point of view the similarity argues for the genuineness of the epistle, and from the other the speeches convey exactly the teaching we might expect from the writer of the epistle. The speeches attributed to St. Peter are of first-rate importance in determining the conception of the early Church with reference to the Person of Christ. The Christology they contain consists in an application of the Christian facts to the religious hopes and anticipations of Israel.

'The apostles speak out of an experience whose roots lie in the nation's past, and which

Christology of the New Testament

are renewed into fresh growth by Christ. The proof they offer is the evidence of facts and of what the facts point to. . . . It is a simple, objective, practical presentation of Christ, yet with features of its own so specifically new as to make it impossible to identify it with the existing religious schools.¹

The speeches of St. Peter represent the spirit of Jewish Christianity, and are characterized by a simplicity which stamps them as belonging to the very earliest period of the Christian Church. At the same time it is impossible to account for the very full reference they contain without bringing out what is both absolute and universal. They contain the germ of what was afterwards developed and expounded by later apostles. Not only is the Messianic aspect of our Lord's life put before us, but there is a remarkably full delineation of its sacrificial aspect set forth.

'The fundamental identity of St. Paul's teaching with that of the original apostles is perhaps the most convincing proof we have that the truth of the Incarnation was both apprehended and proclaimed from the first.'²

What is perhaps the greatest statement of all is made in the very first speech delivered by St. Peter on the day of Pentecost. 'Let every house of

¹ A. S. Martin, article in *Dict. of Christ and the Gospels*, vol. i., p. 479. See also Dr. Ramsay, *Expositor*, vii. 7; and Dr. Sanday, *Expository Times*, December 1908, p. 109.

² G. S. Streatfeild, *The Incarnation*, p. 73; Dr. J. Weiss, *ut supra*.

The Christ of the Gospels

Israel know assuredly that God hath made Him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom ye crucified' (Acts ii. 36). Dr. Weiss speaks of this passage as 'a gem to the historian of primitive Christianity,' and the 'principal proof-text for the earliest Christology.' We should therefore consider it carefully. The first thing that appears as we read it is the extraordinary confidence with which the statement is made. Only a few days before 'this Jesus' had been crucified with every mark of indignity, while His followers had been terror-stricken fugitives, hiding behind closed doors for fear of the Jews. But here they are in the open, claiming for their crucified Master not merely Messianic but divine honour.¹ Dr. Weiss lays undue stress upon the verb 'made' in this verse when he says that our Lord was made 'Lord and Messiah' by His exaltation; that He then became in reality what since His baptism He was in claim and anticipation. The tense which appears in the Greek text cannot be explained as referring back to some particular moment of time. The passage sums up the whole previous history of which the apostle has been speaking, and the aorist tense which is here used describes no temporal relation, but rather an act which stands in its completeness outside all time. The speaker has discovered in the crucified but risen and glorified Jesus that divinity which he had adored in the God of his fathers, as well as the fulfilment of those exalted hopes which belonged to the

¹ See above, chapter i. p. 14, note.

Christology of the New Testament

whole spiritual life of his people, and which had been summed up in the word 'Messiah.' He claims, with an assurance which could scarcely be increased, that this divinity belongs by the direct will of God to the man Jesus of Nazareth, well known to his hearers. Their faith is a matter of experience, and is not open to question. All logical and intellectual difficulties had been swept away in one moment of unearthly experience in which the memorable past had been illuminated with a light that could never thenceforth go out. In the second speech given by St. Peter, Christ is spoken of as the 'servant' of Jehovah. The word used, so far from lowering the transcendental view of our Lord, really increases it; inasmuch as it connects the historic Jesus with the Messianic Servant of Jehovah as described in the prophecies of Isaiah. To interpret the Petrine use of the word we must keep in mind the expiatory and universal aspects of the suffering Servant of prophecy, through whose mediatorial sufferings deliverance was to be wrought out for the people of God, and the reign of righteousness established in the earth. This continuity between the past history of Israel and the present facts of unquestioned experience is a marked feature of these discourses, and should be estimated at its full value. The central fact of that experience is beyond question the resurrection of Christ. By reason of that resurrection a seal had been placed upon His mission, and an ample justification to His claims had been given. In the address given in the

The Christ of the Gospels

house of Cornelius it is in virtue of the resurrection that Christ is declared to be the Judge of quick and dead. In the resurrection, and the ascension which completed it, Christ is exalted to be ‘a Prince and Saviour,’ and the royal largess of this exalted Prince is ‘repentance and remission of sins.’ The sense of sin, created, as St. Paul afterwards showed, by the law, was met and removed by Christ, and in none other is there salvation. He both hears and answers prayer, and is the Prince of life to those who believe in Him. It was reserved for another apostle to show how this was to be brought about through the union of the believer with the risen Lord; but the beginnings of Pauline teaching are involved in these speeches of St. Peter, and the reserve maintained, especially when we remember that the later doctrine was familiar to St. Luke, who records the earlier statement, is the strongest evidence of their authenticity.

In St. Peter’s first epistle we have the same teaching as to the Person of Christ which we have found in the Acts. The Christology has its roots in the religious life of the past history of Israel. When the writer says of those to whom he writes that they are ‘an elect race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God’s own possession,’ he is conferring upon them titles which had been freely used to describe Israel, but which were now true of those who had accepted Christ. This Lord of their allegiance is described in the same objective and simple way in which He is described in the Dis-

Christology of the New Testament

courses of the Acts. Fore-ordained before the foundation of the world, He has now been manifested for their sakes. In the flesh He suffered for them, but He was raised from the dead, and is now on the right hand of God, having gone into heaven; angels and authorities and powers being made subject unto Him. Thus endowed with power He is a living and abiding Word of God, the source of life to those who believe, and who will find in fellowship with Him eternal glory. The whole letter is steeped in the atmosphere which belongs to the gospel story, and the clue to its interpretation lies in the Messianic hope and expectation of the Jew. These, however, are now interpreted, and the secret of Israel is unfolded as Jesus in mediatorial function, leading men into that fullness of moral and spiritual life which is salvation and glory.

In such writings we find a faith in our Lord Jesus Christ which is as simple as it is profound; which rests upon the human fellowship of Jesus, but which has been led by means of that fellowship to the recognition of a full divinity. No candid critic of such writing can deny that the faith of the first disciples gathers around one who was to them both perfectly human and perfectly divine. They may have been mistaken in their interpretation. That raises other questions into which we do not enter here. But that they did so believe is not open to question. In the very earliest days subsequent to His ascension our Lord is invested with divine honour. His followers see that He belongs to the

The Christ of the Gospels

eternal counsels of God, that in due time He appeared to fulfil them; and having done so He becomes to those who accept Him the author of their salvation, conferring upon them at once the power to repent and the forgiveness of their sins. In an article to which we have already referred Dr. J. Weiss says of these early Christians, ‘Conceptions which our intelligence thinks it necessary to separate, and which a St. Paul did separate, appear to have found a place in the same mind side by side.’ Waiving the question whether St. Paul did or did not ‘separate,’ we would ask whether ‘our intelligence’ may not after all be wrong in thus attempting to distinguish the physical from the metaphysical in considering the Person of our Lord. After all, St. Peter and those whom he addressed on the day of Pentecost were in a better position to judge than we can ever hope to be. In the light of Easter Day and of Pentecost they knew that ‘this Jesus’ was ‘the very God.’ For them the human and the divine had made one Personality unique and consummate, and to Him it had been possible to die, to rise again, and to ascend to the right hand of God, and there, the mediator of a new covenant, to admit men into the forgiveness of sins, and into a perfect fellowship of life eternal.

In this mere outline of the New Testament teaching on the doctrine of the Person of Christ, we have made no attempt to deal with that great subject in anything approaching detail. To do so would require a volume to itself. It has been sufficient for

Christology of the New Testament

our purpose to select from each of the three main divisions of the New Testament writings passages which find general acceptance as genuine, and to show how in each the two great notes in the doctrine of the Incarnation—perfect Man and perfect God, are fully honoured. This is borne out at once by historical reference and by the minutiae of linguistic exposition. Even in this partial and imperfect treatment we are presented with the following issues :

1. The recognition of the divinity of our Lord follows immediately upon the conclusion of His earthly ministry. The interval of time is far too short to allow for the ordinary process of apotheosis. If it be claimed that apotheosis within the lifetime of a human being is not unknown, the answer is that there is a world of difference between the apotheosis of a ruling Emperor, to whom such an act would be acceptable, and that of One who had arrayed against Him all the forces of civil and ecclesiastical authority, and whose apotheosis followed within a few days upon His crucifixion as a malefactor within the very city where He had been put to death.

2. There is a full and assured historic basis, upon which writers and speakers loved to dwell, at the back of those more spiritual aspects of our Lord's Person. That which accounts at once for apostolic teaching and for its general acceptance by the Church, is the fact that the ground of their appeal was found in matters of common knowledge at the time. The facts were extraordinary, it is true, but

The Christ of the Gospels

this does not confer upon us, upon whom the end of the ages have come, the power of disputing them. The conclusive evidence will always remain with those who could say: ‘We saw, we heard, and our hands have handled.’

3. The metaphysical issues are in keeping with the facts as stated. Given the history, not only are St. Paul’s conclusions inevitable, but the deepest spiritual experiences of the universal Church all down the ages find their one but adequate explanation in them. We have found these essential elements of a true doctrine of Incarnation—a true humanity subsisting with a true divinity within the sphere of a single Personality—in the Epistle to the Hebrews. Here they may be found in what is perhaps their most completely elaborated form in New Testament writings. Proceeding farther up the stream of Christian thought and interpretation, we have discovered their impressive and far-reaching delineation in the writings of the Apostle Paul. Even in the earliest teaching of the Church they are clearly before us, and the Petrine teaching given us in the discourses of the Acts of the Apostles leaves little to be desired in this particular. Is it possible to trace this stream of thought any farther up its course? There await our study the Gospels themselves. Do they support the interpretation given? Or are we to hold this interpretation the baseless fabric of a dream projected upon the scene of this world’s consciousness by that prince of visionaries—St. Paul? In attempting an answer to this question it is clear

Christology of the New Testament

that we must subject our records to a much more minute investigation than we have attempted in this chapter. We must consider whether our Gospels are real sources, or whether we must go behind them before we can hope to discover the spring from which has issued this mighty river which has quickened in countless hearts the hope of eternal life.

THE GOSPEL RECORD

f

THE Synoptic Problem is fraught with momentous issues which the Church, and not scientific criticism alone, is concerned to face. Its deep religious significance cannot be ignored. To what extent are the Synoptic Gospels trustworthy sources for the life of Jesus, for the history of primitive Christianity? The question of historicity is raised: we are ultimately pointed to the problem of the Person of Christ. . . . In Mark and 'Q' we have two independent accounts which are alike traceable to a comparatively early period. Alike they point to Palestinian circles—to a tradition which, originating on Aramaic soil; is still, on the whole, free from foreign influences. What if dependence must be mainly on Mark and 'Q'? In the earliest Gospel the historic Jesus looms large as a great personage. The voice heard from the treasure-house of recorded sayings is that of One who spoke as none had spoken before, or has spoken since.

REV. H. L. JACKSON, *Cambridge Biblical Essays*.

The Synoptic writers abstained from drawing the conclusion to which their statements logically point. It is one of the chief signs of their historical value that they are content to narrate the bare facts, unadorned and unidealized.

REV. C. E. NOLLOTH, *The Person of Our Lord*.

CHAPTER III

THE GOSPEL RECORD

THE scriptures to which we now turn our attention have been exposed to a considerable amount of criticism. That this should be so is due to the fact of their supreme importance, and instead of causing distress to the believer, should be considered rather a tribute to the value of the writings in question. Indeed, from a balanced and legitimate criticism the Christian Church has everything to gain and nothing to lose. It may be said of the evangel no less than of the evangelist that 'We have this treasure in earthen vessels,' and in days gone by the Church has not sufficiently distinguished between the casket and the heavenly treasure it contains. In attempting to get behind the Gospels as we have them to the sources out of which they assumed their present form, we do indeed discover the human element in their composition, but the extent to which we do this is the extent to which we also reveal the divine content. As the human in the gospel is honoured, the greater honour does the divine receive. The paradox

The Christ of the Gospels

of the Incarnation is repeated in the scriptures which declare it. They reveal to us the work of both God and man, and to ignore or disparage either is to weaken and impoverish the other. We therefore proceed to an examination of the sources of the Gospels, which convey to us, as we shall see, precisely that view of the Person of Jesus Christ which we have already discovered in the earlier writings of the Christian Church.

Before we come, however, to a detailed consideration of these Gospels, it is necessary that we consider briefly, and on general lines, a notable theory which has now been practically abandoned, although at first it seemed to solve the problem of the genesis of our Gospels.¹ It is that which finds the basis of the Synoptic Gospels in an oral tradition established by frequency of repetition in schools of catechumens. This theory was first advanced in Germany by Gieseler, and its most notable advocates in England have been the late Bishop Westcott and the Rev. Dr. Arthur Wright. These remind us that the memoirs of Christ's life were recited in the Church by catechists, and committed to memory by catechumens, until the frequent repetition had practically 'stereotyped' the record—if such a word may be used of an oral tradition. They account for close resemblances in the three Gospels by this fixed condition of the narrative;

¹ The greater part of what follows I have previously embodied in an article published in the *Homiletic Review*, 1910.

The Gospel Record

while differences, which are equally apparent, are explained as due to two human imperfections: (1) the necessarily different account which different but equally credible witnesses would give of the same event, and (2) the failure of the human memory in transmitting orally the same discourse. But it is evident that the two terms of this explanation cancel one another. Its advocates cannot have it both ways. They claim 'a stereotyped tradition,' yet with it they allow for 'slips of memory.' If the tradition was so remarkably fixed, as it must have been to account for the many and marked resemblances, such 'slips' would have been impossible. Nor are these differences slight verbal changes. They amount in some cases to whole sections, and sections of great importance, such as the Lord's Prayer, the Eucharistic words, and the story of the resurrection. If any sections are likely to have been fixed by frequency of repetition they are these, and yet they vary considerably. Side by side with an admitted condition of fixedness, absolute enough to account not only for the often quoted 'awkward parenthesis' in Mark ii. 10, but for many another unusual word, we have as marked divergences, amounting sometimes to the omission of whole sections, whose disappearance from a tradition represented as so extraordinarily fixed it is hard to explain.

The theory of oral tradition rests really upon the assumption that documents containing memoirs of the works or words of our Lord were comparatively

The Christ of the Gospels

late in appearing. But the appearance of logia preserved upon pieces of papyrus shows that there were documents at a very much earlier stage of Church history than is indicated by the more ordered collections which we have in the first Gospel.

Again, the original catechetical instruction must have been given in Aramaic, while these resemblances are in Greek, and ‘verbal resemblances disappear in translation.’¹

An even more destructive criticism of this theory is to be found when we reflect that though the method of instruction must have arisen in Jerusalem, and though it is clear from the fourth Gospel, and from the resurrection story as given in the third, that there was a Judaean ministry as well as a Galilean in the course of our Lord’s public life, yet this tradition scarcely refers at all to what took place in Judaea. The fact that the Synoptics record only the Galilean ministry ‘is inexplicable if the tradition grew up in the heart of the city they so strangely neglected.’² In another passage in the same article Dr. Sanday says: ‘The stamp which these Gospels bear is not collective but individual, and this cannot be explained if they are the product of the Church working collectively.’ Such arguments make the theory of a purely oral tradition as the basis of the Gospels untenable. In a recent

¹ See Gould, *Introduction to Gospel according to St. Mark*, p. 10.

² Dr. Sanday, *Expositor*, Fourth Series, Vol. iii. pp. 186–187.

The Gospel Record

article in the *Expository Times*,¹ Dr. Wright so far modifies his position as to allow that ‘documents—temporary documents—were in use from the first’; but he finds these documents in ‘tablets, perhaps half a dozen, which St. Peter used for refreshing his memory.’ This concession, however, is scarcely sufficient, and it is difficult to imagine St. Peter using ‘notes’ as a modern preacher might do. As we shall show later on, Dr. Wright has made so real a contribution to the solving of the Synoptic problem that it is much to be desired that he may see his way to abandoning the oral basis, and to applying his illuminating distinction between the first, second, and third editions of St. Mark, to the documentary theory, which at present seems to hold the field and to offer the most likely solution of the problem.

1. THE MARKAN NARRATIVE.

Accepting, then, that the sources of our Gospels, going back as far as we can safely do so, were documentary, we are bound to notice that practically the whole of the second Gospel is contained in the first and third. It must therefore be prior to them both. Now if it had been incorporated *en bloc*, our inference would be fairly easy. But side by side with the reproduction of unusual words and phrases, which an editor like St. Luke would be expected to alter, but which he has allowed to remain to bear witness to his extreme reverence for the material he was using, there are marked omissions which make

¹ *Expository Times*, February, 1910.

The Christ of the Gospels

it almost impossible for us to conclude that the Mark before him was identical with our canonical Mark. Thus the whole of Mark vi. 45—viii. 26 is wanting from the third Gospel. The passage contains such incidents as that of the appeal of the Syrophoenician woman, and much teaching on ceremonial defilement and Pharisaic teaching. It is inconceivable that St. Luke, with his strong sympathy for women, and with his acceptance of the Gentile mission of his great friend St. Paul, should deliberately set this aside if it had been in the record which he was using.² Further, it is recognized by all that the second Gospel is full of vivid touches of description, many of them dealing directly with Christ Himself, and giving a definite impression of the Person of our Lord. These are, of course, peculiarly valuable, and must have been even more so in early days when so much of tender recollection gathered around the Person of Christ. Yet these are almost entirely lacking from both the first Gospel and the third. That those who prepared these Gospels, writing at different times, in different countries, and for different readers, should by mere coincidence have fixed upon the same expressions for omission is hard to believe. The explanation generally given of this fact by those who believe that

¹ Since this Lecture was in print Dr. Sanday has published a volume of Studies in the Synoptic Problem, in which an explanation of this omission is put forth by Sir J. C. Hawkins. The explanation, however, does not seem to us to be conclusive.

The Gospel Record

the canonical Mark was before both St. Matthew and St. Luke is that they omitted references which might seem undignified in describing our Lord or His disciples. But to this it may be replied that the principle is not carried through. For example, the story of our Lord's Passion is given in all three records; yet in the human shrinking from the cup at that time so near to Him there is a trait which, on the principle referred to, was far more likely to be suppressed; and no one can claim that the disciples chosen to watch with Him appear in a creditable light on the occasion. There are many expressions which seem to show that the second Gospel was later than the first. For example, in Matt. xiii. 55 we read 'Is not this the carpenter's son? Is not his mother called Mary?' But in the Markan parallel (vi. 3) this appears as 'Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary?' Here St. Mark would certainly seem to have given us a later description written after the doctrine of the Virgin-birth had had time to spread in the Church. For St. Matthew to have spoken of our Lord as the carpenter's son, altering the record before him to do so, is to lessen, not increase, the supernatural view of our Lord's Person which is supposed to belong to the later Gospel.

But these so-called 'omissions' of St. Matthew and St. Luke are far more than mere personalities. The word for 'Gospel' occurs with considerable frequency in the second Gospel. It is a late word, not found before A.D. 53. If it had been in

The Christ of the Gospels

the record which St. Luke was using it is scarcely likely that he, with his fondness for the verb which describes the preaching of that Gospel, could have carefully omitted the noun. Yet it never appears in the third Gospel. In Mark xi. 17 we read: 'My house shall be called a house of prayer *for all nations*.' It is not at all likely that this last phrase was deliberately rejected by both St. Matthew and St. Luke, the one with his strong predilection for quotations from the Old Testament, and the other with his strong appreciation of everything which indicated the universality of the gospel message. In Mark ii. 27 we read that 'The Sabbath was made for man.' This is a striking phrase, and it is difficult to see why both St. Matthew and St. Luke should have agreed to omit it. The evidence to be derived from the use of names in the three Gospels is striking and important. It has often been noticed that while in the Gospel of St. Mark names of persons are given freely, these are absent from the Markan narrative in the other two. One instance must suffice. The name of the man who bore the cross of our Lord to Calvary is said in the second Gospel to have been Simon, and the addition is made that he was 'the father of Alexander and Rufus.' Now it is possible that St. Luke and St. Matthew might omit this reference as unimportant; but if the canonical Mark was really later than the Markan narrative which appears in the other two, and if it was prepared, as tradition tells us, in Rome, then when we remember St. Paul's reference to a certain

The Gospel Record

Rufus in his Epistle to the Romans, we can see that it is equally possible that the strangely casual reference made in connexion with Simon's name might be inserted in a later edition because it had local interest, though it was lacking in the earlier editions. That is to say that what are called omissions made by St. Matthew and St. Luke were not omissions at all, but these two had earlier editions of St. Mark's writing in which the special reference did not appear. We have room for only one of many interesting geographical references in this connexion. The third evangelist, in describing the cure of the demoniac, whose name was legion, tells us that his cure took place in a district known by the name of Gergesa. This is the name of the town, and marks that accurate description which would be natural in an early version which had Palestine for its birthplace. In the first Gospel, which was probably prepared in Egypt, the locality is described under the name 'Gadara,' this being a name better known abroad; but the second Gospel, which was compiled in Rome, gives, as we might expect, the official name of the district—Gerasa. The difference between the three points to a difference in the localities where they were prepared, and falls in admirably with the theory that one was written in Syria, another in Egypt, and the third in Rome.

For some time critics have been feeling after a decision in this direction. J. Weiss tells us that the canonical Mark is not identical with the Markan narrative in St. Matthew and St. Luke. P. W.

The Christ of the Gospels

Schmiedel says that, in view of secondary passages, the canonical Mark is a later edition, while Dr. Salmon maintains that in the second Gospel, as we know it, we have what is at once the oldest and the youngest of the Synoptics. Dr. Arthur Wright seems to put us in the true direction for solving our problem, but his conclusions are made most difficult by reason of his insistence upon oral tradition. St. Mark, we are told, was the interpreter and amanuensis of St. Peter, and Dr. Wright speaks of three editions prepared by St. Mark embodying the accounts given by St. Peter of the mighty works of his Master Christ. The first edition was prepared during the earliest period of St. Peter's preaching—namely that which terminated in the visit to Cornelius in Caesarea. It has been pointed out that St. Peter's address in the house of Cornelius is almost an epitome of the Markan narrative. This earliest edition, Dr. Wright considers, was the one which came into the hands of St. Luke and was used by him in the preparation of his Gospel. If we ask how this Markan narrative, memoirs of St. Peter's preaching, came into the hands of St. Luke, it is not difficult to suggest an answer. In accounting for the 'Philip section' in the Acts of the Apostles, Harnack¹ calls attention to the fact that St. Luke spent two years—A.D. 57-59—in the house of Philip in Samaria. We read that the daughters of Philip exercised the gift of prophecy,

¹ Harnack, *Luke the Physician*, pp. 39 and 153.

The Gospel Record

and this statement is further enlarged by Papias, who is quoted by Eusebius to the effect that 'they related accounts of the old times.'¹ Also in the pseudo-Clementine Romances, consisting of disputes between St. Peter and Simon Magus, the scene of which is laid in Caesarea, we are told that one Clement 'sends to a friend a work written from Peter's dictation concerning the true Prophet.'² All this seems to indicate that there was some connexion between an early Gospel and Caesarea. It is, then, no great stretch of the imagination to suppose that St. Luke came across this during his stay in that city; and if this was the first attempt of St. Mark to put into writing the statement which St. Peter gave of the life of Jesus the Messiah, we account at once for the fact that the Markan narrative as it appears in the third Gospel is more brief than it appears in the other Gospels, and that noteworthy incidents do not appear in it, these having presumably been added in later editions.

The second edition of the Petrine Memoirs was prepared by St. Mark during the course of his episcopate in Alexandria. He seems to have gone to Alexandria first about the year A.D. 41, and after having accompanied Paul and Barnabas in their first missionary journey, to have returned to Egypt. At any rate, Eusebius tells us that the close of his episcopate took place in A.D. 62. It is most probable that during his ministry in Alexandria there would

¹ Eusebius, Hist. III., 39, 9.

² Clementine, *Homilies*, 1-20, *Recognitions*, 1-17.

The Christ of the Gospels

be a demand for some written account of the life of Christ such as he would be in a position to give to the church of which he had charge. This account would be coloured by the locality in which it was written, in the sense that incidents which would be of interest to Jewish Christians residing in Egypt would be given, foreign references would be explained, and items of no great interest to the community would be omitted. The reproduction of these memoirs would also afford an opportunity for the insertion of additional incidents which had not found a place in the earlier record. All this is precisely what we find in the Markan narrative of the first Gospel. The flight of the Holy Family into Egypt appears in this Gospel, and its readers need a translation of such words as Golgotha, while the story of the Syrophoenician woman appears, though it has no place in the Markan Scripture used by St. Luke. Turning to Patristic references, in spite of the statement made by others that St. Mark wrote in Rome, we find Chrysostom, Eusebius, and Jerome asserting that Egypt was the birthplace of St. Mark's Gospel. There need be no contradiction between these Fathers and those who, like Clement, tell us that it was produced in Rome. Both may well be correct in statement; but one will be describing one edition, and the other a later edition by the same writer.

In A.D. 62 St. Mark comes to Rome, where St. Paul speaks of him as being associated with him (Col. iv. 10 and Philem. 24). In 2 Tim. iv. 11,

The Gospel Record

St. Paul had spoken of him as being ‘useful for ministering,’ an expression which Zahn interprets to indicate that St. Paul knew that St. Mark was in possession of these priceless memoirs. It is generally accepted now that in one passage St. Peter records (1 Peter v. 13) St. Mark’s presence with him in Rome, and shows that the former intimate and affectionate relations between them have been resumed. If afterwards, as tradition indicates, St. Mark once again wrote down the events of Christ’s life as he had heard them given by St. Peter, it is certain that, while there would be a general likeness to what he had previously written, there would nevertheless be points of difference. The record would be considerably enriched. Additions to the story would be made.¹ From the storehouse of his memory St. Peter would bring forth new incidents, or St. Mark would recall incidents related by St. Peter which had not found a place in his earlier editions. Most important of all would be those vivid representations of our Lord which have done so much to bring the divinely human Personality before the imagination of the Church. Other points which had rightly been set forth in earlier editions would be omitted here, as being of less importance to a church largely Gentile in character. By this time the Church is beginning to speak of a ‘gospel,’ and the phrase rightly finds

¹ See Dr. Arthur Wright, *New Testament Problems*. Also two striking articles in the *Monthly Review*, 1904, by Monsignor Barnes.

The Christ of the Gospels

a place in the later work. The teaching of St. Paul is now permeating Christian circles, and expressions take a mould more distinctly Pauline than they had done in the earlier work. Roman and military terms may be expected, and they certainly abound. In a word, the second Gospel, while retaining much that we find in the first and also in the third, is fuller and more vivid, while special dogmatic and purely local features appear.

If this theory of three editions in documentary form, all prepared by St. Mark, and having the authority of St. Peter as ultimate source, be applied to the narrative portions of the three Synoptic Gospels, many a difficulty will be removed, and many an apparent contradiction will be seen to be no contradiction at all. It is impossible to attempt this here, to any great extent, but, by way of illustration, let us consider the earliest section in the second Gospel in this light. Critics find considerable difficulty in dealing with the three accounts of the ministry of the Baptist and of the temptation. The two form really one incident, inasmuch as the temptation of our Lord springs directly out of His baptism by John. Now if the second Gospel, as we have it, were in the hands of the compilers of the first and the third, it becomes difficult to account for the fact that the narrative of these events is very brief in St. Mark but comparatively full in the other two, St. Luke's being the fullest of all. We should have expected the very reverse—that the earliest would be full, and that later evangelists, by eliminating what from

The Gospel Record

their point of view was unnecessary, would give a slighter account. If St. Luke's was the latest of all, whence did he derive the additional matter? To say that he found these in 'scraps of oral tradition' can only be allowed if all other explanations are proved impossible. One way out of the difficulty has been to consider that these sections belong not to the narrative source, but to the collection of 'sayings' which were used by St. Matthew and also by St. Luke, and which modern critics distinguish by the convenient formula 'Q.' But this at once determines the view that 'Q' is partly narrative, and the description of St. Matthew's contribution as 'Discourses' ceases to be determinative. That there should be some amount of question and answer in describing an incident does not remove it out of the category of 'narrative,' but there is a world of difference between the section we are examining and that which contains the Sermon on the Mount. The latter is distinctly a 'discourse'; the former is as clearly 'narrative.' Now the theory that St. Mark prepared three editions of his Memoirs of St. Peter's preaching enables us to see that each edition would begin, as was natural, with some account of the great forerunner of our Lord, and of the circumstances which led up to His beginning His ministry. The earliest or Palestinian edition, that is the one which came before St. Luke, would contain a full account of one who commanded so much local attention as to have led the religious authorities in Jerusalem to send to ask him to give

The Christ of the Gospels

an account of himself. The second edition, too, written for Jews of the Dispersion, who would have heard about John, and who doubtless questioned in their turn whether he were the Messiah or ‘that prophet,’ would be not quite so full, but it would still embody much detail which would be of interest to a Jew. The significant addition of the phrase ‘and with fire,’ in describing the baptism of the coming Messiah, would be full of meaning to those who had witnessed the manifestations connected with the coming of the Holy Ghost either at Pentecost or in the house of Cornelius in Caesarea; but in the third edition, prepared considerably later, and written at Rome for a church which was largely Gentile, not only is the phrase ‘and with fire’ entirely omitted, but the whole account is very much abbreviated, only so much being given as would suffice for a brief introduction to our Lord’s ministry. This would be done for no other reason than that it would not be of such supreme interest in Rome as it would be, and was, in the case of those for whom the earlier editions had been prepared. If St. Luke and St. Matthew had been in possession of the canonical Gospel of St. Mark, it is difficult to see how, working separately as they did, they could have tacitly agreed to add the phrase which would recall the cloven tongues of fire. The vividness of the later edition appears again in such words as describe the heaven as ‘riven asunder’ when the Spirit descended upon our Lord; and another such touch is given in the account of the temptation, when we read that He was ‘with the wild beasts.’

The Gospel Record

We are now in a position to deal with that part of the Synoptic Gospels which is common to all three. We have seen that we need not consider that the common element must be identically the same. The 'Common Tradition'¹ of which Dr. Abbott and Mr. Rushbrooke speak need not be reduced to such words and phrases as are identical in the three Gospels. Neither need we imagine a gospel 'nucleus' which came into the hands of all three evangelists, and was worked at and amplified by each, until at last we get the Gospels as we know them.² That is to reintroduce under another name the German theory of an Ur Markus or original gospel nearest akin to the canonical Mark. This theory is now practically abandoned; it being strange that, if so important a source of the three Gospels once existed, it should have dropped out of sight without a single reference to it being made by the Fathers. The statement of Papias quoted by Eusebius³ really gives us all that we require,

¹ *The Common Tradition of the Synoptic Gospels*, by Dr. E. A. Abbott and W. G. Rushbrooke, M.L.

² *The Growth of the Gospels*, by W. H. Flinders Petrie, D.C.L.

³ Eusebius, *Histories*, 3-39: 'This also the Elder (Papias) used to say, "Mark having become Peter's interpreter, wrote accurately all that he remembered; though he did not record in order that which was either said or done by Christ. For he neither heard the Lord nor followed Him, but subsequently attached himself to Peter, who used to frame his teaching to meet the wants of his hearers, but not as making a connected narrative of the Lord's discourses. So Mark committed no error, as he wrote down particulars just as he recalled them

The Christ of the Gospels

provided we recognize that the three Markan narratives represent three different attempts by St. Mark to write down what, as St. Peter's 'interpreter,' he had so often heard the apostle relate. The difference of surroundings and of occasion of writing will account for such divergences as we find in the three narratives, while the common authorship accounts for the strong likeness between the three accounts. Having, however, established the close connexion between the three Gospels as far as their narrative is concerned, it is clear that we secure something of great importance from the point of view of this treatise. For we see that behind the scribe whom we know by the name of Mark stands the authority of St. Peter, one of those singled out by our Lord for intimate association with Himself. No better witness could be desired of the facts out of which, as we shall see, the Christian Church has been enabled to construct that view of the Person of Christ which fulfils all human instincts and spiritual aspirations. Criticism has but served to make clear the human element in the composition of the wonderful writings, and this is accomplished without the surrender of that which first made the record authentic. Indeed, the value of this section of the record is increased when we see that St. Mark has recorded the descriptions of St. Peter. We shall now turn to the other Gospels, and we shall to mind. For he took heed to but one thing, to omit none of the facts that he heard, and to make no false statements concerning them.”

The Gospel Record

find that that which makes either of them distinctive only gains in authority by the criticism to which it has been subjected. The wonder grows as we see that by means of the human instrumentality, working 'in many parts and by many methods,' one impression is left upon the mind of the reader, one claim to the allegiance of our spirits enforced. 'Many have taken in hand to draw up a narrative,' but out of the varied work there emerges the figure of One both human and divine. He belongs to all the ages, and embodies the highest and truest in the race. He gathers up into Himself all human instincts, and fulfils them by making them, in and through Himself, divine. He is Son of Man and Son of God.

II. THE MATTHAEAN LOGIA

In the foregoing section we have dealt with that portion of the first Gospel which is obviously Markan in character and origin. The composite character of the Gospel has long been acknowledged. A considerable portion of it consists of narrative taken from the second Gospel, either as this latter stands in the canon, or, as is more probable, from some earlier edition of the work of St. Mark. This appears in the Gospel without change, even where sometimes change might have been thought desirable, and yet with marked differences, due to the fact that it was prepared under different circumstances from the later edition which forms our canonical Mark, and for different readers.

The Christ of the Gospels

We shall not here consider further this section of the first Gospel, but pass now to that portion which gives it its distinctive character, and which accounts for the name by which it is known. There is a well-known statement of Papias quoted by Eusebius to the effect that 'Matthew composed the logia in the Hebrew tongue, and each man interpreted these as he was able.' Now it is quite certain not only that the first Gospel is largely Markan, but also that the language in which it appears is not Aramaic but Greek. It is clear, then, that this Gospel associated with the name of St. Matthew cannot be the same as the writing of which Papias spoke. In considering the statement of Papias mentioned above, we notice that both St. Paul and St. James make use of 'sayings' of our Lord which do not appear in the Gospels; and this fact, taken with the significant discoveries at Oxyrhynchus, leads us to conclude that these pithy and striking 'sayings' were much in use in the early Church. There is nothing improbable in the statement that a collection of these was made by St. Matthew. It is to be noticed—and the importance of the reference will appear later on—that in another passage Papias, writing of St. Peter, says that he did not make a collection of the sayings of our Lord,¹ whereas Matthew made what may be called a systematic arrangement, a collection which had a plan running through the arrangement. St. Matthew,

¹ οὐχ ὥσπερ σύνταξιν τῶν κυριακῶν ποιουμένος λόγων.

The Gospel Record

then, collected discourses, and they were topically arranged. Now if we remove the Markan section from the first Gospel, we see at once that the remainder is made up of discourses, and it is not difficult to trace a very definite plan in their arrangement. The statement of Papias thus evidently means that St. Matthew collected and arranged a considerable number of the sayings of Christ which were floating about the Christian Church, many of them in some documentary form, while others belonged rather to what is known as the oral tradition of the earliest days of the Christian Church. This enables us to see how the first Gospel received was ascribed to St. Matthew. It was so ascribed because it embodied the invaluable collection. The name which has been given by modern critics to this collection of St. Matthew is ‘Q,’ an abbreviation of the German ‘quelle’ or source. It is possible, however, to see behind the systematic arrangement of St. Matthew traces of a compilation of sayings without purpose or plan, and the formula ‘Q’ would be more appropriate to such a collection as being the ultimate source. But, assuming for the moment that ‘Q’ stands for St. Matthew’s work, the question arises whether it was wholly made up of sayings or whether there was some admixture of narrative. Dr. Burkitt contends that it contained a narrative of the Passion, and was a ‘Gospel.’¹ Dr. Sanday, however, writing of ‘Q’² says:

¹ *The Gospel History in Transmission*, p. 133.

² *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics*, vol. i., p. 575.

The Christ of the Gospels

'The leading purpose of this little book appears to have been to set before its readers some account of the Christian ideal, the character and mode of life expected of them as Christians. It was felt that this could be best done by collecting together a number of typical sayings and discourses of Christ. There was no idea of writing a biography, and not even in this case of composing a "gospel" (or full statement of the redeeming acts of Christ), but only a brief exemplar to set before the eyes and minds of converts.'

Harnack does not allow that 'Q' contained a Passion narrative, and states that it was no gospel like St. Matthew, St. Mark, and St. Luke, though it was not merely a formless compilation of sayings and discourses without any thread of connexion. He does, however, allow that it contained the story of the temptation and of the baptism, together with that of the healing of the centurion's servant.¹ This considerably weakens the claim that 'Q' is no gospel; and it is possible to account for these sections appearing in the canonical Matthew without including them in 'Q.' Dr. Stanton takes much the same view as Harnack with reference to these sayings. The balance of opinion is in favour of limiting St. Matthew's contribution to a collection of 'sayings,' properly so-called. In an admirable discussion of the use of the word *logia*,² Dr. Lightfoot shows that from the time of Philo onwards the word was used to describe any narration of facts whether

¹ Harnack, *Sayings of Jesus*, p. 181.

² *Supernatural Religion*, p. 172.

The Gospel Record

in word or deed, but that there can be no doubt that the earlier use of the word was in the sense of what we know as an ‘oracle,’ that is, a short condensed utterance. It is quite possible therefore that though the more extended use of the word was not uncommon in the time of Papias, he used it in the equally well-known sense of ‘saying.’ Dr. Stanton argues in favour of the word being used in this sense to characterize St. Matthew’s work,¹ and we shall use it with this meaning. It has been sometimes said that to include the story of the baptism in the Markan section of the first Gospel leaves the Matthaean section, properly so-called, without a sufficient introduction. Such an introduction, however, is readily found in Matt. iv. 23-25. So with the story of the centurion’s servant. As Dr Wright points out,² this contains far too much narrative for us to include it in a collection of logia, and the close correspondence in language between the account in St. Luke and that in St. Matthew can easily be accounted for if St. Mark included the story in his first and second edition, but for some reason omitted it from his third.

If we may, then, conclude that the logia were bona fide ‘sayings,’ are we to assume that they existed in a separate collection now lost, or may we expect to find them in the first Gospel? Dr. Burkitt says,³ ‘The logia of Matthew are hopelessly lost’;

¹ *The Gospels as Historical Documents*, p. 47 ff.

² *Introduction to Synopsis*, p. 13.

³ *Gospel History in Transmission*, p. 127.

The Christ of the Gospels

and this is generally assumed by most critics. We would, however, point out that when the Markan portion of the first Gospel is removed, together with certain fragments which were probably incorporated into the Markan narrative (e.g. chaps. i.-ii., xiv. 28-32, xvii. 24-27, and several sections in chap. xxvii. such as 3-8, 19, 24-28, 51-53, 62-65), we shall find that there are left us five great blocks of homogeneous matter which are wholly composed of 'sayings,' at the close of each of which there is a phrase which is in each case practically the same, 'it came to pass that when Jesus had finished these sayings,' or their equivalent (vii. 28, xi. 1, xiii. 53, xix. 1, and xxvi. 1). This is obviously intended to form an easy transition from discourse to the narrative which in each case follows it. Sir John Hawkins compares with this arrangement that of the five books of the Pentateuch, the five books of the Psalms, the five Megilloth, and other similar groups, and concludes by saying, 'It is hard to believe that it is by accident that we find in a writer with the Jewish affinities of Matthew this five times repeated formula.'

Another most significant fact is that, according to Eusebius (H.E. iii. 39), Papias wrote a commentary on the logia of Matthew in *five* books, and we may conclude that he did so because the logia were already so divided. All this makes a strong *prima facie* argument that the logia of Matthew are not lost, but exist in the first Gospel, sandwiched between corresponding portions of Markan narrative.

The Gospel Record

This conclusion is strongly upheld by M. Barnes in the *Journal of Theological Studies*, January, 1905.

Now it has been long admitted that St. Luke has used a similar collection of logia in his Gospel, and the further question arises which of the two comes nearer to the original collection. Dr. Armitage Robinson and Dr. Burkitt consider that if we wish to reconstruct the order and arrangement of 'Q' we must take the outline of it from St. Luke rather than from St. Matthew. Schmiedel, however, contends that if we are to consider which of the two has preserved the logia in the more original form, the answer must be that it is sometimes the one, sometimes the other. To us Schmiedel's position seems the more reasonable. For we see no reason to prevent us from concluding that the logia of St. Matthew are intact in the first Gospel, and that the difference of order in introducing them followed by St. Luke may be due to the fact that he has treated this source precisely as he treated the Markan source, and has introduced each particular saying at that point in the narrative which he considers the more appropriate. Thus the Lord's Prayer is introduced, not as it appears in the first Gospel, but comparatively late in the course of our Lord's ministry, on an occasion when our Lord was at prayer with His disciples. The arrangement of the logia in the first Gospel presents to us so much of a unity¹ that it is easier to believe that

¹ See the description of the several blocks as given by M. Barnes, loc. cit.

The Christ of the Gospels

St. Luke distributed sayings so arranged than that the compiler of the first Gospel brought them together. Papias' commentary seems to indicate that the arrangement was made before the sayings were incorporated into the first Gospel, and while they had a separate existence.

The differences, however, between the wording of these sayings in the first Gospel and in the third are so many and so considerable that it is impossible to believe that St. Luke had before him the words as they stand in the first Gospel, and it is easier to believe that some different collection from that which the compiler of the first Gospel employed was used by the third evangelist. When Papias, speaking of Peter, says that he did not make a methodical compilation of Christ's words, he evidently has in mind some other work which by contrast with Peter or Mark could be spoken of as a methodical compilation. Now there is no evidence of any such arrangement in the third Gospel. St. Luke writes 'in order,' arranging his data chronologically. His discourses, too, are blended with narrative in such a way as to make it unlikely that he simply fitted Matthaean logia to Markan narrative. If the original 'Q' is more likely to be discovered in St. Luke than in St. Matthew, it is strange that Papias should have made no allusion to St. Luke in this connexion. It seems therefore probable that St. Luke's discourses were from quite a different source from that which we have in St. Matthew. There must indeed have been many such in circulation in the Christian

The Gospel Record

Church. The very form in which such apothegms were cast would account for the similarity, in some instances the identity, of language in the discourses of the first and third Gospels. But the differences between the two are too great to allow us to suppose that St. Luke had either the canonical Matthew before him, or even the same collection of sayings, with their topical arrangement, as devised by St. Matthew. Difference of translation of a common Aramaic original will not help us; no translation will account for the difference between the two Gospels in the number of the Beatitudes, or in the form of those which appear in both. The addition of the 'woes' to those given by St. Luke cannot be accounted for except on the supposition that St. Luke had quite another collection of sayings before him, unless indeed we allow to St. Luke a freedom in handling his material which is quite opposed to his practice as it appears in other parts of his Gospel. Professor Bacon¹ distinguishes between the use of the Halacha, 'precepts of life,' and the Haggada, 'tales of the Synagogue,' and claims that 'the structure of Matthew and Luke shows that in the one case the Halachic, in the other the Haggadic, principle was predominant from the first.' This means that in the first Gospel we have an arrangement illustrating principles of life, while in the third the different sayings are introduced in connexion with distinct narratives. If, then, the sayings in the

¹ Art. 'Logia,' *Hastings' Dict. of Christ and the Gospels.*

The Christ of the Gospels

first Gospel were arranged according to subject-matter, this must have been done by St. Matthew, and the unity of the Sermon on the Mount will belong to the apostle rather than to our Lord. We need not on this account take up the position that our Lord did not on any occasion deliver a set discourse in which many of these sayings found utterance, but, in the first place, there could have been no report of that discourse taken down. In the second place, it is hard to believe that St. Luke would have separated that discourse into disjointed fragments as, on this hypothesis, he has done; and further, it is extremely difficult to account for the connexion of such passages as Matt. v. 31-32, vi. 7-15, vii. 7-11. Those who hold that the sermon was actually delivered as a sermon by Christ are forced to regard these and other passages as interpolations, but this method of explaining the collection as it stands raises other difficulties. Then if the arrangement was the work of our Lord, there is no reason why we should not suppose that the other sections in which we have blocks of sayings in the first Gospel were also given as delivered by Him, and this would produce an impression of Christ's method far different from what we believe was the fact. It would describe Him as a formalist, whereas the remarks have a spontaneity and freshness about them which make it much more probable that they were uttered as each several occasion demanded, with that readiness which betokened a fountain of truth, brim-full and ever ready to pour forth its

The Gospel Record

contents. We may conclude, then, that when the earliest records of the sayings of Jesus were made there was no arrangement of them into sections, that the only connexion between them was something similar to what we find in the Oxyrhynchus sayings, where each logion is introduced by the simple formula 'Jesus said,' and that at a later stage such collections came before St. Matthew, and later still before St. Luke. It is probable that the collection before St. Luke had been already translated into Greek, while the one before St. Matthew remained in Aramaic, and that the latter proceeded to throw these sayings into more coherent form, while the lack of arrangement allowed St. Luke to distribute the different sayings and to secure for each as accurate a chronological setting as was possible to him. What, then, was the 'unity' which appealed to the mind of St. Matthew, and led him to group together the sayings which make our 'Sermon on the Mount'? The answer to this question varies with the scholar who considers it. Professor Votaw¹ considers that the theme is sufficiently described under the title 'The Ideal Life,' and the Beatitudes are considered to give a summary of the theme which is afterwards developed in detail. Another opinion on the subject is that delivered by Holtzmann, Wendt, and others, who find the theme in Matt. v. 17-20—The Fulfilment of the Law.² Neither of

¹ *Hastings' Bible Dictionary*, extra vol.

² Dr. Stanton describes the theme as 'the character of the heirs of the kingdom'; but this is more appropriate as a description of chapter xviii.

The Christ of the Gospels

these, however, seems to supply a sufficient unity, and the Bishop of Birmingham comes much nearer to a solution of the problem when he describes the theme as ‘The Moral Law of the Kingdom.’ Dr. Gore, however, goes on to say that it is ‘law, not grace; letter, not spirit.’ But although we may acknowledge that while it contains what we should expect in a first chapter of discourses on the kingdom—a statement of its statutes, of the great principles that underlie the whole conception as it existed in the thought of our Lord—it is the *spirit* of the law rather than its letter that is before us; and as we read its subtle and far-reaching distinctions we see the command embodied for all time in the Gospel of the Grace of God.

M. Barnes, in an article already cited, has found a unity not only for the Sermon on the Mount, but for all the remaining four discourses in the first Gospel, in that idea which was always so prominently before the religious thought and aspiration of the Jew, and which formed the great declaration both of the Baptist and of Christ—‘The kingdom of God.’ Indeed, if the arrangement of the different sayings in the first Gospel be the work of St. Matthew, we shall need a unity not only for the sermon but also for the other sections, and M. Barnes’ suggestion has much in its favour. M. Barnes thus arranges the sections—

Matt. v., vi., vii.—The Law of the Kingdom.

Matt. x.—The Rulers of the Kingdom.

Matt. xiii.—The Parables of the Kingdom.

The Gospel Record

Matt. xviii.—Relations of the Members of the Kingdom.

Matt. xxiv., xxv.—The Coming of the King.

This seems a fair description of the contents of these sections, though others may prefer other titles; but the fact of the formula of transition from 'sayings' to narrative at the close of each of these sections makes a strong argument that these sections were embodied in the Markan narrative from some collection of sayings, and the Matthaean collection at once suggests itself, and accounts, not only for the Patristic references, but for the title given from the earliest times to the first Gospel.

It will be noticed that in this arrangement no place has been found for the collection of *logia* which we find in Matthew xi. and xii., and in parts of xxii. and xxiii. The majority of critics include these in the Matthaean collection which they call 'Q.' It must, however, be acknowledged that they differ very considerably from the five blocks of discourses which we prefer to consider as forming the Matthaean collection. In the first place, the linguistic correspondence between the first and third Gospels in these sections is close and striking, while in the five sections given above it is quite otherwise. In the second place, they appear in a framework of narrative; they spring directly out of some incident; and lastly, they lack the comprehensive character, the universal reference, which is so marked in the Sermon on the Mount. These features of the passages in question have led Professor Bacon to claim

The Christ of the Gospels

that they are Lukian in origin, and that here St. Matthew is dependent on St. Luke.¹ It is better, however, to hold that these sections belonged to those original collections which St. Matthew used in compiling his five discourses, and that they were embodied here by the redactor who added the Matthaean logia to the Markan narrative. The close correspondence in language indicates that they came before the editors of the first and third Gospels in Greek. If, then, we may accept 'Q' as a collection of sayings arranged on no particular system, we may agree that this has been lost, and we can account for its loss. The need for such a collection would disappear as soon as St. Matthew's arrangement of the same matter came into use. Otherwise it is as difficult to understand how 'Q' has disappeared from the record as it would be to account for the disappearance of an Ur-Markus, supposing such a document to have existed.

One more remark may be made in conclusion. By thus arranging the 'sayings,' St. Matthew has interpreted them. Bringing together sayings which are related in the subject-matter with which they dealt, though they may have been separated as regards the occasion when they were uttered, St. Matthew has enabled the world to see not merely the principles of the kingdom, but also the mind and purpose of the King. With this clue to interpretation, the very heart and mind of the divine Teacher

¹ See Articles 'Wisdom' and 'Logia' in *Hastings' Dict. of Christ and the Gospels*.

The Gospel Record

is disclosed, and in the very moment in which we see the far-reaching frontiers of the kingdom of heaven we also see at its centre the august and ineffable Person who is in Himself the eternal sanction of the law, its only sufficient interpretation, and the final Judge of all men.

III. THE SPECIAL SOURCES OF ST. LUKE

In approaching the study of the third Gospel we have two points of considerable advantage. In the first place, the research of Harnack¹ and other scholars enables us to consider the question of authorship settled, and we may accept without misgiving their finding that the author is the companion of St. Paul described by that apostle as 'Luke the beloved physician.' In the next place we have the advantage of an introduction to the Gospel, which throws a flood of light upon the conditions which obtained at the time when the Gospel was written. From this we learn :

1. That many accounts of the life of our Lord were beginning to appear.
2. That some of these were documentary.²
3. That the author was in a position to verify these by references to those who had been eye-witnesses of the events described.

¹ See *Luke the Physician*, by Adolph Harnack, English translation.

² Though the word διήγησιν does not of itself indicate more than narration, yet the phrase ἀνατάξασθαι διήγησιν, contrasted as it is with παρέδοσαν ἡμῖν, describes a written source rather than an oral one which is more fitly described by the latter.

The Christ of the Gospels

4. That he made an attempt to arrange these events in chronological order. For though the word rendered ‘in order’¹ need not refer to order in time, yet the character of the writing which follows shows that the word was used with that meaning.

The value of this statement can scarcely be exaggerated; we shall not dwell upon it, but proceed at once to consider the Gospel itself in the light thus thrown upon its composition. The first thing which we notice is that the author has made use of the variety of sources which he has indicated in his introduction. For, as we have already seen, practically the whole of the second Gospel appears in the third, as it does also in the first. There are indeed alterations in the wording, but these are due on the one hand to the evident desire of St. Luke to improve the phraseology of his source, and on the other hand to use technical terms such as would commend themselves to a physician in describing works of healing accomplished by our Lord. Even thus he shows his respect for the Markan narrative before him by retaining expressions which we should have considered him justified in altering. But we also notice that there is at least one serious gap in the Markan narrative as it appears in the third Gospel, since it does not reproduce the section Mark vi. 45—viii. 26. We have already considered the significance of this omission. It is difficult to believe that if the second canonical Gospel were before him, St. Luke would have left out this

¹ καθεξῆς.

The Gospel Record

important section, whether to abbreviate or for any other reason.

Further, although he shows such deference to the Markan narrative before him, he does not hesitate to abandon it altogether where he considers that he has before him other matter which for some reason he prefers. This is notably the case when he comes to give his account of the appearances of our Lord after His resurrection.

There are also at least two important additions which he makes to the Markan narrative. They are to be found in the first two chapters, in which we have the account of the circumstances attending the birth of our Lord, and in the passage sometimes called ‘The Great Insertion,’ and sometimes ‘The Travel Document.’ Then, in addition to the Markan narrative thus augmented, it is quite clear that St. Luke has one feature which also belongs to the first Gospel. He inserts a considerable number of discourses of Christ, and the relation of these to the collection of them which appears in St. Matthew’s Gospel must be considered by every student of the Gospels.

It will be unnecessary here to consider the Markan source of this Gospel, and the way in which it probably came into the hands of St. Luke, inasmuch as we have already considered these questions in dealing with the second Gospel. The abbreviated form in which it appears, its Palestinian references, its sympathy with the Samaritans, all point to the period which St. Luke spent in Caesarea in the

The Christ of the Gospels

company of Philip the evangelist as the occasion in which St. Luke came into possession of this narrative. We have seen that there is a distinct connexion of both St. Peter and St. Mark with Caesarea, and the probabilities are very great that St. Luke found these all-important memoirs ready to hand when he visited that town.

In the same way we shall omit any discussion here of the relation between St. Luke's use of the *logia* and that of St. Matthew. It is sufficient to indicate such results as we have already arrived at in discussing the Matthaean *logia*, namely, that the collection of the 'sayings' of our Lord before St. Luke differed from that before St. Matthew. The fact that both were collections of the 'sayings' of our Lord will account for the correspondence between them, but the differences are too many and too great to allow us to consider that they were identical. The two evangelists also arranged them in different ways, St. Matthew's arrangement being 'topical,' while St. Luke attempted a chronological arrangement, introducing each discourse at that point in the narrative which he thought appropriate. Dr. Plummer points out that absence or scarcity of the characteristics of St. Luke are most common in the matter which appears in the first and third Gospels, and he infers from this that where the materials were already in Greek St. Luke would use them without any great amount of alteration. If this be so, then it would appear that 'an immense amount of what St. Luke has in common with St. Matthew, or with both him

The Gospel Record

and St. Mark, was already in a Greek form before he adopted it. It is incredible that two or three independent translations should agree quite, or almost, word for word.' This, however, scarcely affects the conclusion at which we have arrived, that the *logia* in the first Gospel came from a different source from that which was used by St. Luke. None of the passages cited by Dr. Plummer in illustration are taken from the five great blocks of sayings which appear in the first Gospel. So that we may still conclude that the compiler of the first Gospel used St. Matthew's Aramaic collection of 'sayings,' while the collection before St. Luke came into his hands in a Greek translation.

When we pass to the third source used by St. Luke we come to what is at once matter of extreme interest, and yet most difficult to assign to any recognized source. At the fifty-first verse of the ninth chapter St. Luke enters upon a period of our Lord's ministry which is not described by the other evangelists in anything approaching the same fullness of detail. Were it not for this evangelist the Christian Church would have possessed no record of such sections as those which tell us of the Good Samaritan, of the Rich Man and Lazarus, of the Importunate Widow, and of the Prodigal Son. The passage is introduced by the statement 'And it came to pass when the days were well nigh fulfilled that He should be received up, He steadfastly set His face to go to Jerusalem'; and throughout the whole section the author, it is clear, presents Christ to us as

The Christ of the Gospels

journeying up to Jerusalem. In the former portion of the Gospel the scene is entirely and consistently Galilean, but in this section Galilee is left behind. The route is first eastwards to Perea and then through that country to Jerusalem. For this reason it has been called 'The Travel Document,' and by others 'The Perean Section.' A distinct unity is conferred on the section by this element of travel. It might have been described as notes of a memorable journey. Dr. Arthur Wright does not allow any such unity as we have supposed. He considers the section to be a collection of undated material made up of 'fragments which came to St. Luke, as he taught at Philippi, by every ship.'¹ In this, however, Dr. Wright goes against the general opinion, which is as we have stated. In addition to the unity conferred by the fact that it describes the journey up to Jerusalem, there is one feature which seems to indicate a single source, and that is the strong Samaritan sympathy shown. 'Almost every instance in which the Samaritans are mentioned by the Synoptic writers is limited to this short part of St. Luke.'² This gives rise to a conjecture which seems to us to have much in its favour, that St. Luke found this 'source' where he found his Markan material. We have seen that he spent two years in the house of Philip the evangelist at Caesarea. Now we know from the Acts of the Apostles that Philip 'went

¹ Article, 'The Gospel according to St. Luke,' *Dict. Christ and the Gospels*.

² M. Barnes, *The Witness of the Gospels*, p. 30.

The Gospel Record

down to the city of Samaria and preached unto them the Christ' (Acts viii. 5), and it is extremely probable that the chapters which describe the ministry of Philip in St. Luke's other book are due to his intercourse with Philip in that city. Monsignor Barnes argues strongly in favour of the probability of this section in the Gospel having been derived from Philip. But considering that the events described are not limited to Samaria, and bearing in mind the repeated emphasis laid upon the fact of the journey, it seems to us more probable that while the incidents recorded were collected by one who, from sympathetic feeling, would treasure up any reference to Samaritans made by our Lord, that one belonged to the little band of men and women who accompanied Him upon the memorable journey. To them the incidents of that journey were likely to have been indelibly fixed upon the memory, and very early, we may be sure, they were committed to the safer keeping of some written record. Any attempt to proceed further in seeking for some particular source must remain in the sphere of uncertainty. At best, what is attempted will be conjectural. We may accumulate facts which point in this direction or in that, and we may arrive at a considerable degree of probability, but more than probability is not likely to be claimed by any intelligent student of the Gospel. We feel it necessary to say this before proceeding to note that there are many indications that one of St. Luke's authorities was a woman. It is in keeping with this that

The Christ of the Gospels

we find throughout the Gospel frequent indications of a woman's interest. So frequent are they that the Gospel is sometimes called 'The woman's Gospel.' We shall see how marked this is in the section which deals with all that preceded and accompanied the nativity, and it meets us again in the closing section of the Gospel. In speaking of the narrative of the nativity, Sir William Ramsay says,¹ 'There is a womanly spirit in the whole narrative which seems inconsistent with the transmission from man to man,' and in the travel document the same womanly interest appears again. It is generally accepted as a canon of criticism that the multiplication of sources is to be avoided, and if we could bring those sections of the Gospel in which St. Luke differs considerably from both St. Matthew and St. Mark² within the compass of a single source, the gain would be very great. Now in the opening verses of the eighth chapter we are told that there accompanied our Lord in the course of His ministry certain women who 'ministered unto Him of their substance.' The statement allows us to see what would otherwise have been left in obscurity, how the human needs of our Lord were met during at least the latter part of His ministry. Pious women have always been foremost in supporting those to whom they looked as worthy teachers, and that they should have attached themselves to Christ and have ministered to Him is only what we should expect.

¹ *Was Christ born at Bethlehem*, p. 88.

² For attempts to do this, see Stanton, u.s. pp. 221 ff.

The Gospel Record

At the close of the twenty-third chapter we are told that their ministry continued after their Master had been crucified, and that they proceeded to prepare the spices which would be required for embalming the body. Of these women we are distinctly told that they had come with Him out of Galilee, and it is easy to infer that they would be likely to treasure up the precious teaching of their Master, whom they served with such devotion.

Another prominent feature in this Gospel is the intimate knowledge which it reveals of what went on in Herod's court.¹ This peculiarity appears again in the other writing of St. Luke. For in the Acts of the Apostles the same thing meets us, and here St. Luke appears to set his authority against that of Josephus, from whose narrative of Herod's death he differs considerably. Is it possible for us to discover a single source which would account at once for the knowledge of what took place in the course of the journey up to Jerusalem, for the detailed information of Herod's attitude to Jesus, and for the strong womanly element which belongs to this Gospel? It is very marked that among the names of those women who ministered to our Lord, and who accompanied Him from Galilee to Jerusalem, was Joanna,² the wife of Chusa, Herod's steward, and in the last chapter of the Gospel her name appears again as having been one of the women. St. Luke is the evangelist who has rescued her name from oblivion.

¹ See Luke iii. 1-19, viii. 3, ix. 7-9, xiii. 31, xxiii. 7-12.

² See Dr. Sanday, Art. 'Jesus Christ,' *D.B.*, p. 639.

The Christ of the Gospels

Only to him has she seemed to be of interest, as she would be if through her devotion to Christ he had been put in possession of these priceless records. In the first chapter of the Acts her name does not appear; but we are told that the disciples continued in prayer 'with the women, and Mary, the mother of Jesus.' The reference can only be to some well-known band of women who were now joined by the mother of our Lord, and there can be no reasonable doubt that they were those who had been the devoted companions of Christ during the latter part of His ministry. Harnack recognizes the necessity of finding some womanly element among the authorities consulted by St. Luke, but thinks that this may be supplied by the daughters of Philip. These, however, do not seem to have been associated with our Lord during His ministry, nor to supply what we need to account for the references to Herod. Another point in favour of Joanna is that, associated as she was with the mother of our Lord, nothing would be more natural than that, in the light of the resurrection, the latter had ventured to entrust to her the wonderful secret which she had treasured up in her heart for more than thirty years. In this way some light is thrown upon the two other considerable sections in this Gospel where the evangelist seems to have access to material other than that which he found in the Markan narrative.

Into the many difficult questions which arise out of the chapters on the nativity, and the closing chapter, which relates to our Lord's post-resurrection appear-

The Gospel Record

ances, we do not propose here to enter. It will be sufficient for our present purpose to see if any light has been cast upon the source or sources of these chapters by recent research. We may consider that there is good reason for taking the chapters together, as coming in all probability from one source. For not only does St. Luke here depart from the Markan narrative, but all three chapters belong to a Jerusalem tradition rather than to a Galilean. The narrative opens with the service of Zacharias in the temple; and the references to Anna and Simeon, and to Christ's interview with the doctors in the temple, are all part of a tradition which belongs to Jerusalem rather than to Galilee. That there must have been such a tradition it is impossible to deny. That a Church which originated and grew up in the Holy City should have been content with a record wholly concerned with the ministry in Galilee can scarcely be believed. The close to the Gospel, too, we may be sure, was a reversion by St. Luke to this same tradition. Many attempts have been made to harmonize the appearances of our Lord after His resurrection as they appear in the Markan narrative—that is to say (for the mutilation of the last chapter in the second Gospel makes us seek its true close in the first Gospel) in the Matthaean—with that which we have in the Lukian Gospel. By far the greater part of these differences may be resolved, if we conclude that in this section St. Luke gives the post-resurrection story as it was recorded by those whose interests gathered around Jerusalem. That there is a close connexion

The Christ of the Gospels

between the nativity chapters and this last chapter is strongly supported by linguistic evidence. Both sections are markedly Hebraistic, and expressions are found in both which are not found in other parts of the third Gospel. There would thus seem to be strong presumptive evidence that the three chapters came from one source. That the section on the nativity is from a woman we may feel almost sure. The story differs from that in the first Gospel exactly as Mary's story would differ from that of Joseph. The mother of our Lord would naturally refrain from speaking of that which was known only to her husband and herself, but after the resurrection she would as naturally feel that she was bound to impart that story to those who, like herself, would then know that the Jesus whose earthly life they had shared was none other than God, who took upon Himself our mortal nature, and was 'found in fashion as a man.' Yet the same modesty and reserve in a matter so wonderful would lead her to impart her secret only to the women who were with her in the upper room while they waited for the coming of the promised Comforter. Among these, as we have seen, was Joanna; and if the wife of Herod's steward may be supposed to have been better educated than the majority of Jewish women, she would be most likely to record what she had received, and to add her own contribution to the story. In his admirable work entitled *Luke the Physician*, Harnack says:

‘A Greek source cannot lie at the foundation of chapters i. and ii. of St. Luke's Gospel; the

The Gospel Record

correspondence between their style and that of Luke is too great, it would have been necessary that the source should have been rewritten sentence by sentence. It is possible, but not probable, that for the narrative part an Aramaic source was translated. The Magnificat and the Benedictus at all events are St. Luke's compositions.¹

It is difficult to go so far as Harnack does in ascribing even parts of this essentially Jewish composition to a Gentile like St. Luke, nor is there any reason why we should. The whole section is without seam or division, and a most marked Jewish point of view belongs to every part of it. These features also create the conviction that the source was documentary. There is a literary finish about it which, if it was not given by St. Luke, must have been found in the source itself. The chapters do not read like 'scraps of oral tradition.' If, further, the source was feminine, then it seems most likely to have come from one of those women who were associated with our Lord, and afterwards with His mother.

The closing section of all is that which deals with the appearance of our Lord after His resurrection. Here Dr. Stanton thinks it 'most probable that the evangelist himself committed to writing these traditions in regard to the appearances of the risen Christ contained in his last chapter.'² But it is difficult to

¹ *Luke the Physician*, p. 215.

² *The Gospels as Historical Documents*, p. 309.

The Christ of the Gospels

see why that which Dr. Stanton refused in considering the chapters dealing with the nativity should so easily be allowed here. The linguistic characteristics of the one section appear also in the other. The same Jewish point of view is maintained. For example, Jerusalem is spoken of as 'the City,' and the reference to the temple in verse 53 is significant. As we have seen, there is a reference to the 'women which had come with Him out of Galilee,' and in the list of these given in verse 10 the name of Joanna appears again. Most critics point out that this verse reads somewhat like an interpolation. We hold that if so, it was an interpolation made by the evangelist into the matter before him. And what could have been more natural than that he should thus acknowledge the source from which he had obtained his special contribution to the gospel story? At any rate, it is clear that St. Luke, having followed the Markan narrative up to verse 55 in the twenty-third chapter, from that point abandons it in favour of the story which he had obtained from some other source and which he has given us in his Gospel. The difficulty of discussing this chapter is greatly increased by the abrupt termination of the second Gospel. But there seems little reason to doubt that the closing verses of the Markan narrative are preserved for us in the first Gospel. This being so, we have in the one Gospel the Galilean tradition and in the other an account which gathers together outstanding features of the Jerusalem tradition. Much has been written of the differing accounts of the appearances

The Gospel Record

of Christ after His resurrection,¹ and unless the distinction be clearly drawn between the Markan narrative and this special source followed by St. Luke the differences between the two narratives are hard to resolve. But as soon as we see that St. Luke, for purposes which seemed satisfactory to himself, abandons here the Markan narrative, which was so exclusively Galilean, and adopts an account in which the appearances of Christ in and around Jerusalem were recorded, many, if not all, of these discrepancies disappear. Our Lord appeared to His followers in both places; and the church in Jerusalem was naturally more interested in those incidents which belonged to their own neighbourhood. An account of these, whether drawn up by Joanna or some other woman we need not determine, came into the hands of St. Luke and forms the concluding section of the Gospel which bears his name.

We have thus in the third Gospel, in addition to the Markan narrative, a considerable use of a collection of logia or sayings of our Lord similar to, but not identical with, that used by St. Matthew, and arranged by St. Luke in a manner differing from that followed by St. Matthew. We also have at least three other sections of considerable length and importance in which St. Luke seems to have followed some authority other than those above mentioned. We have seen reason to suppose that the author of

¹ See an admirable discussion of the resurrection appearances of Christ in the *Hibbert Journal* for 1905, by Torkild Skat Rordam, C.T.

The Christ of the Gospels

these was one of the women who followed Christ from Galilee and ministered to their Master. It is impossible to establish any proof of this, and the matter must be left uncertain. It is certain, however, that whoever the authority or authorities may be, the story recorded in the additional sections of this Gospel are in keeping with the rest. It is one Lord Jesus Christ who looks at us from the pages which contain the account of the ministry in Galilee and those which record the never-to-be-forgotten journey up to Jerusalem, and it is the same divine teacher who gives us the Sermon on the Mount and the parable of the Prodigal Son. Analysis of the sources, so far from weakening the authority of the Gospel, has rather increased it, by enabling us to see the circumstances in which each component part came into being, and thus to account for differences in the record.

Out of all these many and varied fragments there comes into view the single and commanding Personality of the Son of Man. This it is which gives us the unity in the Gospels, and in the creation of this effect we find the unquestioned work of that Spirit whose work it is to take of that which Christ is and to commend it unto us.

IV. THE JOHANNINE SETTLEMENT

In turning from the Synoptics to the fourth Gospel we need not discuss here the vexed question of authorship. It is admitted by all that the apostolic authorship presents us with difficulties, but we may

The Gospel Record

make two claims which we shall be content simply to state. In the attempt to fix a date for the production of this work the general tendency of criticism is steadily towards an earlier rather than a later date; and secondly, if the apostolic authorship has its difficulties, every other theory yet advanced has greater difficulties still.

But we may put on one side the question whether the author was John the son of Zebedee or John the Presbyter, whether this writing was the product of a school of Hellenistic Jews in Ephesus or was the pseudonymous work of some Gnostic late in the second century. Whoever the author may have been, does modern criticism help us to answer from this Gospel, as we may from the Synoptists, the question which here concerns us—‘What think ye of Christ?’

It may be acknowledged at once that the fourth Gospel differs from that presented by the Synoptists. We hope to show that the difference is more in method of treatment than in subject-matter; that though the incidents differ, they differ as supplementary incidents of the same class, and not as entirely different facts which might call upon us to modify our impression of the Person with whom they are concerned. We may even agree that with reference to this Person the point of view in the one Gospel differs from that in the other; that here we have interpretation rather than historical treatment, the unfolding of the significance of a great personality rather than a more or less chronological statement as to the doings and sayings of the Person in question.

The Christ of the Gospels

It is clear that if this distinction between the two writings may be sustained a great part of the charge of contradiction falls to the ground, and it is also clear that with this difference of treatment the fourth Gospel may yet be considered to possess historical value—for, as we have seen, all biography consists of a record of facts and an interpretation of the underlying personality. It is, however, a fact that the refusal of historical value is the great feature of modern criticism. Thus Arnold Meyer speaks of the fourth Gospel as

‘an apology for an exalted conception of Christ in opposition to the Judaism of the second century. It gives us reliable information only concerning the way in which the Church of those days conducted its controversy with Judaism, not concerning our Lord’s original teaching.’¹

So also Dr. Burkitt says, ‘The only possible explanation is that the work is not history, but something else cast in an historical form.’² Dr. Burkitt goes even further than this, and, in speaking of the setting in which the Eucharistic teaching as to the eating of the flesh and the drinking of the blood appears in this Gospel, says:—

‘This is something more than historical inaccuracy. It is a deliberate sacrifice of historical truth; and as the evangelist is a serious person in deadly earnest, we must conclude that he cared less for historical truth than for something else.

¹ *Jesus or Paul*, p. 61.

² *The Gospel History and its Transmission*, p. 228.

The Gospel Record

To render justice to his work we must do more than demonstrate his untrustworthiness as a chronicler.¹

Yet in this same work Dr. Burkitt says that the fourth Gospel is written to prove the reality of Jesus Christ, and that we have some reason to treat with respect its claim to represent the teaching of Jesus Christ. It is difficult to see how we may treat with respect anything that is written ‘with a deliberate sacrifice of historical truth.’ Such statements rest upon a very narrow interpretation of what is meant by history, and if they could obtain universal acceptance we should lose a peculiarly valuable interpretation of the Person of Christ, for no second-century interpretation of that Person can take the place of that of men who shared the daily life of Jesus.

We may notice in the first place that the Gospel itself claims to be historical. In chap. i. 14 the writer says that they ‘ beheld ’ the glory of the incarnate Word. In saying this he uses a word which indicates not the rapt vision of the mystic, but ‘ such a looking as seeks merely the satisfaction of the sense of sight.’² Again, in xix. 35, we read : ‘ He that hath seen hath borne witness, and his witness is true ; and he knoweth that he saith true, that ye also may believe.’ We shall not quote here the verse from chapter xxi. to the same effect, lest we should appear to beg the question of the authorship of the last chapter ; but if we confine our attention solely to the

¹ Loc. cit., p. 225.

² Grimm-Thayer, sub verb *θεάομαι*.

The Christ of the Gospels

two passages cited, it is clear that the writer in the most formal and deliberate manner asserts that he was an eye-witness of the facts he records. Dr. Burkitt acknowledges that many of the old arguments which tended to prove that the writer had been a Jew of Jerusalem have never been disposed of.

' Such simple statements as those of John x. 22-23, "It was the feast of the dedication at Jerusalem; it was the winter weather, and Jesus was walking in Solomon's porch," are difficult to explain on any other hypothesis. At least the person who supplied the information in the text quoted must have had a real knowledge of the topography of Jerusalem and of the Jewish calendar. It must not be forgotten that at the time when the Gospel was published the temple was in ruins and the feasts had come to an end.'

But if we have a writer who evidently belongs to the time and the place of which he writes, who claims in the most pointed way, calling his divine Master¹ to witness that he speaks that which is true, we may surely accept that he at any rate believed in the historical value of what he wrote, and that he was in a position to verify the facts in question. A comparison of the matter held in common between the Synoptists and the writer of the fourth Gospel shows that the latter reveals at every point the significant features of independence, personal testimony, and supplementary detail. This is specially clear in the

¹ The pronoun *ἐκεῖνος* is supposed by some to refer not to the writer but to Jesus Christ.

The Gospel Record

story of the Baptist's mission as shown by Dr. Askwith,¹ and in the account of the feeding of the five thousand.² It is not necessary for us to suppose in this connexion, as some have done, that the writer had before him the Synoptic Gospels, and that he made use of them. If the writer had, in common with St. Peter and St. Matthew, first-hand knowledge of the facts with which he dealt, we can account not only for the points of resemblance, but also for the additional detail so copious in this later Gospel. Its writer must have known the Markan narrative, but there is no evidence that he used it except by way of supplying details omitted from the earlier record, and, in his eyes, of importance. The one reason apparently which is put forward for preferring the Synoptic Gospels to the fourth as history is that they are earlier. But it must not be forgotten that while they are earlier they suffer from serious limitations. As soon as we see the circumstances in which they were produced we know that they cannot be relied upon for giving us a complete biography of our Lord. St. Mark has given us his memoirs of St. Peter's preaching, but these will have many blanks, and cannot be supposed to furnish a complete chronological account of our Lord's life. Still less can this be expected from the collection of sayings drawn up

¹ See Article by Rev. E. H. Askwith on the 'Historical Value of the Fourth Gospel,' *Expositor*, Seventh Series, pp. 244 ff.

² See Westcott, Introduction to *Commentary on Fourth Gospel*, p. 81.

The Christ of the Gospels

by St. Matthew. St. Luke combines these two notable treatises, and adds other matter which he had procured elsewhere. It is also a fact beyond question that the Synoptists confine themselves almost entirely to that part of our Lord's ministry which was accomplished outside Judaea. Their story is exclusively Galilean. And yet it is impossible to believe that there was no Judaean ministry. If our Lord had had nothing to do with Jerusalem before He visited it immediately prior to His Passion, His weeping over the city which was the embodiment of the religious hope and aspiration of His nation would be unmeaning. As Dr. Sanday points out, it is unlikely that a pious Jew would have neglected the command to appear before the Lord in Jerusalem, and the familiarity of our Lord with the inmates of the home in Bethany shows that He had been with them before, and that they had learned to trust Him and to recognize His power to heal the sick. In the Markan narrative (Matt. iv. 12, Mark i. 14) we are told that Jesus 'came into Galilee,' and in the amended text of Luke iv. 44 we read that 'He preached in the synagogues of Judaea.' We have seen that St. Luke, having followed the outline of events given in the Markan narrative, coming to the story of the resurrection abandons St. Mark, and gives an account which describes those appearances of our Lord which took place in Jerusalem. There was then a Judaean tradition as well as a Galilean tradition, and St. Luke not only enables us to fill up certain gaps in the Markan account, but it is noticeable that as soon as

The Gospel Record

he gives the Judaean tradition his narrative comes into closer agreement with the Johannine account. In the same way the 'again' of John iv. 2, and the first three verses of John vii. show that the writer knew that there was a Galilean ministry, though he confines his attention almost exclusively to Judaea. If the Synoptists preferred for reasons which were sufficient to themselves to dwell rather upon the Galilean ministry, this fact must be taken into account when judging of the comparative historicity of the two main divisions of the four Gospels.

As Dr Bruce says:—

'It is quite conceivable that our Synoptic Gospels represent a very one-sided tradition, that they are not even the main stream, but only a tributary of the broad river of evangelic story, and that the stereotyping of this fragmentary reproduction, as if it were the whole, in these parts of the Apostolic Church in which the three first Gospels arose, was due to the prestige belonging to certain sources used in their construction, bearing apostolic names, and therefore justly valued as documents of first-class importance, yet actually far from complete as records of Christ's words and deeds.'

If this is so—and the facts seem to be beyond all question—then there is room for a supplementary gospel, and no very close correspondence either in the particular incidents recorded, or in the *dramatis personae*, need be looked for. Where, however, the stories overlap, not only is there no contradiction, but

¹ *Apologetics*, p. 468.

The Christ of the Gospels

the account in the fourth Gospel is so much richer in detail as to give the impression that of all the four evangelists the fourth occupies most truly the position of an accurate historian.

It has been urged that no theory of a supplementary gospel accounts for the fact that the Synoptists do not mention the raising of Lazarus. Even so good and accurate a critic as the Rev. F. W. Worsley says that the only possible inference is that they knew nothing of it, and that it is inserted into the fourth Gospel because the lapse of time had caused the writer to see the event out of proportion, and he 'thus exalts it into a matter of the greatest importance, whereas it was probably a very quiet family affair.'¹

Dr. Burkitt goes very much further than this. He says that it cannot be fitted into the historical framework of St. Mark—as though the Markan narrative was to be accepted as a complete and detailed chronological history of the life of our Lord. He says that St. Mark is silent about it because he did not know of it; 'and if he did not know of it, can we believe that as a matter of fact it ever happened? For all its dramatic setting I am persuaded that as a matter of fact it is impossible to regard the story of the raising of Lazarus as a narrative of historical events.'² But, as Mr. Worsley has shown, the tenth chapter of St. Mark's Gospel does not suggest an unbroken journey. 'There is evidence of more than one break

¹ *The Fourth Gospel and the Synoptists*, p. 143.

² *Gospel History and its Transmission*, p. 228.

The Gospel Record

in the narrative; the writer is recording certain events which he knows took place prior to the last arrival in Jerusalem, and which he believes took place on the way thither.¹ But such a mere outline of events leaves room for an interruption in the journey on behalf of the suffering family in Bethany, after which Jesus returned again to Ephraim. Even if the sequence of events in Mark x. was so close as to shut out all probability of a visit to Bethany prior to the triumphant entry into Jerusalem, the circumstances under which St. Mark wrote his Gospel prevent our giving the Gospel the place of final appeal in matters of history. The argument from silence is never more likely to fail us than when we are dealing with ‘memoirs of Peter’s preaching.’

Critics have found in the story of the raising of Lazarus great difficulty, as is sufficiently shown by their endeavours to treat it as allegory. Wrede,² for example, considers it an elaborate allegory of the men rising ‘on stepping-stones of their dead selves to higher things,’ or of the once buried life quickened into the activity of divinest service. Wendt suggests that it embodies certain elements from which the story may have been elaborated. A combination of the story of the son of the widow of Nain and the daughter of Jairus with the return from death of the poor man Lazarus furnish, in his opinion, the material out of which this most vivid and circumstantial story has been concocted. To what extent the hesi-

¹ Op. cit., p. 138.

² *Charakter und Tendenz*, p. 6.

The Christ of the Gospels

tation to admit the possibility of miracle enters into these speculations we need not here inquire, but it is possible that the explanation of what makes the great difficulty—the silence of the Synoptists in a matter which appears in the fourth Gospel as so critical as to lead directly up to the death of our Lord—may be more easily discovered. We have seen that the Trito-Mark differs from earlier editions in this, that in it the mention of names is comparatively frequent. Their failure to appear in St. Matthew and St. Luke is generally put down to omissions on the part of these evangelists, but it is far more probable that they appear in the later Roman edition because in Rome, and after a considerable lapse of time, the mention of names would do no harm. In earlier editions which might fall into the hands of Jews more in touch with the localities, attention might have been drawn to the persons concerned. The fourth evangelist tells us that there was even some talk of putting Lazarus to death. In the time of John, however, writing so many years later, this danger would not exist, and he adds the story and thus accounts for the sudden and violent outburst of animosity against Christ, and for the sudden and effective action of the chief priests, the Sadducean party, whose distinctive tenet was directly challenged by such a miracle, and whose position of authority among the sects would lead at once to action being taken. He gives us also such a vivid picture of our Lord's perfect humanity and sympathy, that it is no wonder that the bereaved of every age have turned for com-

The Gospel Record

fort of the wonderful story, and he has put on record the words in which are embodied our highest hope in the moment and article of death—‘I am the Resurrection and the Life.’

The theory of a supplementary gospel furnishes a sufficient answer to those who find a difficulty in the omission of the institution of the Lord’s Supper from the record. There was before the writer, or at least well known to him, St. Paul’s account of the institution of the Eucharistic feast, and this had also been described in the Markan narrative. With these explanations of a matter of such common observance in the Christian Church we may suppose that the writer was content. It only remains for him now to supplement these by giving the significance of the sacrament, the inward and spiritual grace of the outward and visible sign, and this is done, not only in the sixth chapter, but also in that section of the last discourses in which our Lord discusses the life held in common between Himself and His disciples. The parable of the vine is intended to show how communion may deepen into life. But here again advanced critics find great cause of offence. Dr. Burkitt, in the work already quoted more than once, says of the writer of this Gospel—

‘When we find him writing an elaborated account of this last meal, including the announcement of the impending betrayal, in which nevertheless there is no mention of the epoch-making words of the institution, we can only regard his silence as deliberate. He must have deliberately

The Christ of the Gospels

left out this exceedingly important incident, and thereby, so far as the mere narrative of facts is concerned, he creates a false impression of the scene.'

Dr. Burkitt goes on to describe how in chapter vi. there is an exposition of the principles of the high sacramental doctrine of the Eucharist, and in words already quoted charges the writer with a deliberate sacrifice of historical truth. In the first place, we may notice, a second-century writer, anxious to secure authority for his writing, would have been careful to place this 'interpretation' in its historical setting. But is Dr. Burkitt justified in claiming that 'the Eucharistic teaching is transferred from the Last Supper to the earlier Galilean miracle?' It is true that the same spiritual principles are laid down here as are symbolized in the Last Supper, but the mere fact that in the latter case the words are introduced without comment or explanation, though we are elsewhere told that it was held to be a saying so hard that many of His disciples ceased to walk any longer with Jesus, indicates that the idea of a spiritual union so close that it might be described in terms of physical incorporation must have been brought before the disciples on other occasions, and have become so familiar that, when at last the sacrament was connected with the paschal meal, the 'hard saying' was accepted without comment as familiar teaching.¹

The author, knowing how clearly the institution

¹ See Nolloth, *ut supra*, p. 84.

The Gospel Record

of the Eucharist had been described in earlier Gospels and by St. Paul, and knowing also that he himself had given in the description of an earlier discourse the interpretation of both the Eucharistic feast and the feeding of the multitude, was content to pass the subject by, dwelling only upon those incidents which had not been fully treated in other records.

The publication by Dr. Rendel Harris of the ‘Odes of Solomon,’ which he himself had discovered, has an all-important bearing upon the questions that gather round the fourth Gospel. The odes form a Jewish Psalm-book written apparently between A.D. 50 and A.D. 100. Professor Harnack considers that they were originally written between A.D. 50 and A.D. 67, and subsequently worked over by a Christian in Palestine not later than A.D. 100. The significance of this discovery from the point of view of the fourth Gospel is this—that they exhibit most, if not all, of the peculiarly Johannine teaching as current in the first century, and there is a striking correspondence even in the phraseology employed. Thus in ode xli. we read—‘The Son of the Most High appeared in the perfection of the Father, and light dawned from the word that was beforetime in Him. The Messiah is truly One, and He was known before the foundation of the world.’ In ode viii. the doctrine of union with Christ appears as follows—‘Abide in the love of the Lord, and ye beloved ones in the Beloved: those who are kept, in Him that liveth; and they that are saved, in Him that was saved.’ In ode xvii. the Lord is represented as saying ‘nothing appeared closed to

The Christ of the Gospels

Me : because I was the door of everything.' An even more striking similarity of idea is seen in the following—' The worlds were penetrated by the Word, and they knew Him who made them because they were in concord. The dwelling-place of the Word is man' (ode xii.). ' There is nothing that was without the Lord ; for He was before anything came into being, and the worlds were made by His Word, and by the thought of His heart ' (ode xvi.).

The correspondence between these passages and the prologue of the Gospel will appeal to every one. ' Here we have the quarry out of which the Johannine stones are hewn.'¹ For further illustration on this point we may refer the reader to an excellent article on the odes by the Rev. R. H. Strachan. He says :²

' These odes are the most valuable contribution of recent times to the understanding of the fourth Gospel. They bear no traces whatever of Hellenic speculative thought. They prove that ideas like life, light, truth, knowledge, immortality are not Hellenic but Jewish. The same mystical element as we find in the Johannine writings appears in these odes. Harnack thinks that " John " may have been a Jewish mystic of this type before he became a Christian.'

When we turn to consider the discourses we may frankly acknowledge a great difference between the words of our Lord as they are recorded in the Synoptic Gospels and as they appear in the fourth Gospel. In the former the sayings are brief, pithy

¹ Harnack.

² *Expository Times*, October, 1910.

The Gospel Record

sayings, such as would remain in the memory of ‘the common people’ to be pondered over, or they are cast in forms of Oriental imagery, in parables which would bring to the reflective mind a wealth of spiritual thought, and yet be within the grasp of the simple folk in the fields of Galilee or on the shores of its sea. The content, too, of such teaching is ethical; the maxims are moral; they deal with rules of life. It is necessary here, however, to point out that they cannot be considered to be exclusively so. While there is accommodation in the form of the teaching to such limitations as we may easily imagine characterized the simple peasants of the countryside, the basis of the appeal belongs to the deep things of God. The morality, simple as it may be, rests upon the Person of the great Teacher, and leads in purpose and in fact to a personal devotion to Himself. Dr. Sanday calls attention to ‘a second strain’ in the Synoptic discourses. He says ‘These simple-looking sayings are not so simple as they seem. To take for instance the words “He that receiveth you, receiveth Me, and he that receiveth Me receiveth Him that sent Me.” The words are almost childlike in their simplicity, and yet they lead up to the highest heights and down to the deepest depths.’¹ To say that such words as we have in Matt. xi. 25-30² constitute a foreign element in the Synoptic record, is to do violence to the history of the record, and to beg the question whether it was possible for our Lord to

¹ *The Criticism of the Fourth Gospel*, p. 225.

² For a discussion of this passage, see chapter iv. p. 153.

The Christ of the Gospels

have varied His language or His method of appeal. To refuse to Christ all power of self-adaptation, to stereotype even His method of address, is to reduce Him to the merest automaton, and to refuse Him the very humanity upon which some insist as His one endowment. Before we pass, then, to consider the more theological element in the teaching of the fourth Gospel, it is well to insist upon the fact, whatever a certain class of critic may say, that the Synoptic Gospels contain a very considerable element of transcendental philosophy.

But having made that claim we must also acknowledge that there is a great difference between the form in which the discourses are cast in the earlier Gospels, and that in which they appear in the fourth. That difference has been seen and acknowledged from the first. It was Clement of Alexandria who characterized the Gospel as ‘a spiritual Gospel,’ and the phrase may still serve. It means that in the fourth Gospel we have interpretation rather than chronological statements. The Personality in the one is that of the other, but in the one the expression of that Personality is before us, and in the other its secret and significance is made known, as he alone could make it known to whom love had been ‘an unerring light.’

We do not allow that the moral element is lacking from the discourses of the fourth Gospel. It is difficult to understand how any one can accept such a statement who recalls the passages in which our Lord speaks of those who ‘love the darkness rather than

The Gospel Record

the light, because their works are evil' (John iii. 19). Indeed the very antithesis between light and darkness, so frequent in this Gospel, suggests that the moral issues of life are clearly reflected in the Saviour's words as recorded here. It has been said that the teaching is esoteric and mystical; some find in it a distinctly Gnostic element. But even if we take the view that the 'knowledge' here spoken of is merely intellectual—a point which we are far from conceding—such knowledge is based upon the moral determination of the will, for 'if a man willeth to do His will, he shall know of the doctrine' (John vii. 17). So that the question of morals is raised at the very moment when the reference is more directly in the direction of doctrine. We have precisely the same significant connexion in the First Epistle of St. John, a work which is of the same authorship, or at least of the same school, as the fourth Gospel, where the writer lays down the claim that the character of Christ as 'light' makes it of necessity that those who are in fellowship with Him must walk in the light and realize a true fellowship of love in their relations to their fellow men. In a remarkable passage in which we read of the likeness of God and of the assuring vision—a theme which leads us to the rapture of the mystic and the seer—we are at once recalled to the moral effort which is the essential of both vision and resemblance by the words 'Every one that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as He is pure' (1 John iii. 3).¹ There is no divorce

¹ See Westcott, *in loco.*

The Christ of the Gospels

between morality and religion indicated in such words; but quite the contrary.

The difference in form between the logia of St. Matthew's Gospel and the set discourses of the fourth Gospel are in our judgement sufficiently accounted for by the difference in the audience on the several occasions of Christ's teaching. As the Rev. H. L. Jackson, in his very clear and instructive work,¹ says:

' Away in Galilee—where the scene is so largely laid by the Synoptists—those to whom Jesus will address Himself are "the multitude," the poor, the weary and the heavy-laden, unlearned and simple folk, sheep having no shepherd; His very disciples are of the same sort; if He dispute with Scribes and Pharisees, He is ever mindful of the limited comprehension of the bystanders; He confines Himself to the concrete, and draws His similitudes from the objects of Nature, the events of social life. In Jerusalem—the scene as laid for the most part in the fourth Gospel—the audience is of another sort; those with whom Jesus has now to do are no longer simple, uninstructed folk, but practised theologians of the temple schools, and His discourses are framed accordingly.'

The distinction drawn by Mr. Jackson is a true one, and accounts for much of the difference between the one class of writing and the other.

There are, however, other features of these discourses which cause us far more difficulty than that

¹ *The Fourth Gospel and some Recent German Criticism*, pp. 143 ff.

The Gospel Record

with which we have been dealing. Some of the most remarkable discourses are said to have been delivered in some sort of privacy, or at least when the presence of some one to record is not stated. There is no great difficulty in the case of the conversation with Nicodemus. The gist of the memorable conversation may have been given by Nicodemus or by Christ, or the writer may even have been present himself. The same explanation may account for the full and circumstantial account of the talk with the woman of Samaria. The conversation with Pilate (John xviii. 33-37) is far more difficult. Here we are driven to infer that some one of the soldiers may have given an outline of what passed between Pilate and Jesus, and the writer may have filled up the outline from his own recollection of the well-known attitude of his Master to such questions as Pilate raised. And this brings us to a concession which must be made in all fairness to those who press such points of criticism. We are bound to admit a considerable element of subjectivity in these discourses. The writer gives us his Master's words in the vivid form of direct speech, but it is obvious that what we have is really that Master's teaching enlarged and interpreted by the recording apostle. So naïve and artless is he that the narrated discourse sometimes glides from the quoted speech into the apostolic comment without any attempt being made to mark the point of transition. In the years that had intervened between the teaching and its committal to writing, love had brooded over that which it had seen, and

The Christ of the Gospels

heard, and handled. ‘What first were seen as points it now knew stars, and gave the fuller light to the world.’ But ‘with whatever freedom the words and acts of Jesus have been reproduced, the total effect of the picture is truth.’¹ The element of subjectivity is not confined to this Gospel: it appears even in the Synoptic writings. It has often been pointed out that the words of the great commission (Matt. xxviii. 19) do not read like that which we have been accustomed to find given as sayings of Jesus in the earlier Gospels. The baptismal formula is more like an expansion made when baptism was more of a sacrament than it was in the days of Jesus, and when the Doctrine of the Trinity was seen to be an inevitable deduction from our Lord’s teaching of His own relation to the Father.² That there was an underlying ‘saying’ of Jesus thus amplified few will wish to deny, and as the words appear in the earliest MSS. and versions without any suggestion of hesitation, they cannot be considered an interpolation from later times. It appears, however, in the form of a divinely directed expansion of some simpler phrase. The gift of the Spirit at Pentecost had thrown a flood of light upon the Person of our Lord and upon His relation to the Father, and in that light the injunction of our Lord was interpreted. The great commission is not less authoritative because it contains an interpretation of a command

¹ Dr. Bruce, *Apologetics*, p. 480.

² Nolloth, *The Person of our Lord*, p. 215.

The Gospel Record

which was probably simpler in expression though equally profound in meaning. In the same way the fourth evangelist is concerned to give the substance of what has either been spoken in his hearing or told him subsequently, and he does not hesitate to give it in a form which is of his own devising. ‘His individuality is impressed on all his reports of the sayings and discourses of Jesus. The language is his own.¹ The Gospel of St. John is a distillation of the life and teaching of Jesus from the alembic of the apostle’s own mind.’

‘It is the result of a strong first-hand impression of a wonderful Personality. It is a blending of fact and interpretation; but the interpretation comes from one who had a unique position and advantages for getting at the truth of that which he sought to interpret. It is the mind of Christ seen through the medium of one of the first and closest of His companions.’²

Such sayings throw a light upon the fourth Gospel which is well calculated to maintain its historicity. They recognize features of the Gospel which place it in a class of its own; but the Gospel is not on that account deprived of historical value. None of the Gospels are complete biographies of Jesus; they are writings which present His personality before us, but they do so in different methods. The earlier Gospels give us that personality in terms of outward expression; the later Gospel is not indeed devoid of fact, but it reveals a careful selection of facts,

¹ Stevens, *Theology of the New Testament*, p. 172.

² Sanday, op. cit. p. 169.

The Christ of the Gospels

and interpretation of them, which enable the Church to see the meaning of the personality so expressed in the Synoptists and its significance in the matter of faith. The one is as truly historical as the other. No chronicler is discredited because he enlarges upon the motive and the purpose of deeds, or shows the inner meaning of speeches recorded by him. To insist that every description of our Lord should be cast in precisely the same mould, and to refuse to acknowledge one which is not so cast, is surely an indication of a forced and unnatural method of criticism. This interpretation is of peculiar value because it is made by one—as we believe—who was in a unique position to interpret. If it had never been given to the Church we should have long since set to work to make one for ourselves.

In dealing with the fourth Gospel we have sought to confine our attention to a single issue, that of the relation of the Gospel to the Synoptic narrative. We have assumed that it is the writing, probably by means of an amanuensis, of the son of Zebedee, and it may be thought that some attempt should have been made to establish this much disputed point. It may be urged in reply that until some better theory of authorship is advanced we may well acquiesce in the traditional view. Its difficulties are well known to every student of the Gospel, but in default of a better, we hold that the traditional view is still in possession of the field. What external evidence there is against it is to be found first in the silence of Ignatius with regard to St. John's residence in

The Gospel Record

Ephesus, and secondly in the statement now being pressed, that St. John suffered martyrdom at the hands of the Jews, as did his brother St. James. With reference to the former it is sufficient to say that no argument is more uncertain than the argument from silence; and, with reference to the latter, we notice that the two writings cited in support belong one to the fifth and the other to the ninth century. They are hopelessly at variance with one another, the one point about which they are agreed being that the two brothers suffered martyrdom at the hands of the Jews, whereas we know that St. James was put to death, not by the Jews, but by Herod. This evidence is supposed to be strengthened by the fact that in the Syriac martyrology the martyrdom of the two brothers is celebrated on the same day. This is held to point to their having been put to death at the same time! If such evidence were brought forward in support of some traditional view, we can imagine the scorn with which it would be overwhelmed.

We do not attempt to urge what may be stated on the other side. Those who may wish to pursue the subject further will find an admirable statement by Dr. H. L. Jackson entitled *The Fourth Gospel and some Recent German Criticism*, and no reference is needed to such works as those of Dr. Sanday and Dr. Drummond. The internal evidence in favour of the apostolic authorship could scarcely be better put than it is by the late Bishop Westcott in his invaluable introduction to his commentary on this Gospel. We

The Christ of the Gospels

have been content in this chapter to insist upon what Dr. Sanday calls 'the interpretative function' of the writer, as accounting for the unquestioned difference between his writing and that of earlier evangelists, and as giving us what is of peculiar, of inestimable value, the interpretation of a Personality colossal, commanding, unique, divine. The value of such an interpretation must be reserved for a later chapter.

THE SYNOPTIC JESUS

‘In our Lord’s own clear consciousness, in the unquestioning concession, on the part of all the records, of His personal sinlessness, we have a fact which as much transcends the powers and limits of all other earthly life as His resurrection does. The gospel from the beginning was not at all that Jesus most perfectly represented our common nature or illustrated our human life, but that He brought with Him something into our nature and life which was not there before, and raised them into something which was not themselves or their own, and to which they could attain only in and through Him. What that was is expressed in the Christian consciousness that Jesus Christ is the human, but the divine-human, conqueror and destroyer of sin and of death.’

DU BOSE, *The Gospel in the Gospels.*

‘I think that St. Mark’s Gospel contains the essence of the experience and formulas of the Church. Certainly it is necessary to apprehend Jesus by faith as well as by reason; and it is only by learning to do His will that I shall come to understand at all fully who He is. But I believe it was by the experience of His humanity that the disciples came to understand and worship His divinity. And I expect that the same method is the truest for us all.’

J. M. THOMPSON, *The Gospel according to St. Mark.*

CHAPTER IV

THE SYNOPTIC JESUS

OUR investigation of the sources of the Synoptic Gospels has made us see that they are not three entirely independent works, but it has also enabled us to see that behind the works, as we have them, stand three authorities, whose value as witnesses is the greatest possible. At the back of the Markan narrative stands St. Peter. In its freshness and naïveté, its life and movement, the characteristics of the Galilean fisherman, the eager, impulsive, devoted follower of Jesus, are fully manifested. The sayings of Jesus stand connected with the name of St. Matthew, and by his arrangement of them he has given an all-important interpretation of the spirit and purpose of our Lord's teaching upon the kingdom of God—a subject of first importance to the Jew. Whether the authority for St. Luke's special contribution be one of the devoted women who accompanied Him on His journeyings or not, the record bears such unmistakable marks of an eye-witness, the story is so entirely of a piece with that of more fully guaranteed authorities, that

The Christ of the Gospels

we need not hesitate in considering it, like that of the others, an authentic statement of 'what Jesus both began to do and to teach until the day in which He was received up' (Acts i. 1). The gain from criticism is thus very great. Full allowance may be made of facts of authorship which seemed at first to destroy the value of the documents as contemporary records of the life of our Lord. But the illusion was only for a moment: in reality we retain the threefold witness, independent, contemporary, and conclusive, in which our fathers believed. When the facts of authorship are thus disentangled, we account the more easily for differences in the stories which have long been considered 'contradictions,' and the form at once lowly and majestic of the Son of Man is seen by us in clearer light. The historic Jesus stands out in commanding personality, and the words that have been garnered—a priceless harvest—are seen to be both spirit and life.

Harnack speaks of the great departure from what Jesus thought and enjoined involved in putting 'a christological creed in the forefront of the gospel, and in teaching that before a man can approach it he must learn to think rightly about Christ.'¹ We would not assume that Harnack suggests in this that the Gospels tell us nothing of the Person of our Lord. We take it that his protest is made against those who put an ecclesiastical creed before their own impression of the personality of Jesus as set forth in the

¹ *What is Christianity?* p. 147.

The Synoptic Jesus

Scriptures. It is hard for us, to whom the gospel story has come in close connexion with the interpretation of its meaning by the Church, to read it without having our appreciation of a truly human personality blurred and confused by that of a transcendental Christ crossing and recrossing the lines in which the evangelists have set before us the full humanity of our Lord. Our gain would not be less but greater if we could read that story as it was presented to the disciples when it was acted before their wondering eyes

In loveliness of perfect deeds,
More strong than all poetic thought.

We need not fear that we should in that case be robbed of the divinity which has for us not only interpreted the facts, but endowed the claim with an eternal sanction. That was not the result upon the first disciples. It was through *His* humanity that they learned to discover in Him a divinity before which they bowed in worship. The humanity was too perfect for them to account for it save in the terms of incarnation. When they had discovered in Him what man might be, they saw what God must be. They knew Him first as the friend, and then as 'a Prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people' (Luke xxiv. 19). They thus entered into a personal relationship to Him: they made Him their Master and Lord, and the insight given by fellowship enabled them to name Him 'the Messiah, the Son of the living God' (Matt. xvi. 16). Yet the great confession of St. Peter

The Christ of the Gospels

was scarcely understood even by the man who made it. The crucifixion shattered all Messianic hopes beginning to gather round their Lord. It was not until the resurrection came to interpret for them that which they had only guessed at, that the full meaning of the wonderful life was before them. We may even accept without fear of loss or compromise in that which has interpreted us to ourselves, and filled us with living hope, that to our Lord Himself the consciousness of a true humanity, simple and undivided, preceded the recognition within Himself of Deity. Nothing but confusion and vagueness of thought awaits us if we allow ourselves to think that the God He was came before His consciousness from the earliest days. The puerilities of the Apocryphal Gospels are a sufficient warning to us of the penalties which the Church will pay if any attempt be made to confuse or divide the complete Personality of our Lord by positing in Him a clear sense of inherent Deity from the first. We do not gain, but lose, when we thus divide the Person of Jesus. The true way of approach for Him, for His disciples, and for us is through the humanity to the Deity which alone explains it.¹ The divinity of Christ itself ceases to have for us the meaning and beauty which belong to it when we think of Him as one who in reality belongs to the sphere of things spiritual. We come near to mak-

¹ Dr. A. B. Bruce, *With open Face*, pref. to 2nd Ed., pp. 10-12; Dr. R. C. Moberly, *Atonement and Personality*, p. 97; Dr. W. Adams Brown, *Christian Theology in Outline*, p. 344; Dr. Jas. Denney, *Studies in the Life of Christ*, p. 69.

The Synoptic Jesus

ing His humanity a pose, an acted part, an artificial accommodation to some compelling necessity. The perils of Doketism—the system which taught that the humanity of our Lord was but in appearance—have not ceased to threaten the Church. The law of Christ, the life we may live in Him, is immeasurably removed out of our reach unless we hold tenaciously to the teaching of Scripture itself that He was made man, that He was tempted in all points like as we are, and that *therefore* He is the firstborn of many brethren, Captain of our salvation, not alone as authoritative, but as sharing the life of those He leads into the fullness of God's salvation. The humanity of our Lord is the true way by which we shall arrive at His divinity; and even if the Synoptic Gospels were emptied of every trace of the supernatural, we need not fear. When we find in Him a perfect humanity we are close upon the Deity which transfigures, indeed, but never destroys it.

In recent times critics have been moving in the direction of a simpler and fuller presentation of the humanity of Jesus. Thus Dr. Percy Gardner protests against those who from the time of the Gnostics onwards have thought that they could show their piety by making the human life of the Master into a sort of mirage, a show without underlying reality.¹ ‘At certain times,’ he says, ‘it has almost seemed as if the historic Jesus was about to disappear in a mist of theology.’ Perhaps the statement in this direction

¹ *Hibbert Journal*, ‘Jesus or Christ,’ p. 46.

The Christ of the Gospels

which has attracted most attention and called forth the greatest amount of protest, is that made by Dr. Schmiedel in the *Encyclopaedia Biblica*,¹ where he selects nine passages which he calls ‘the foundation pillars for a truly scientific life of Jesus.’ An examination of these passages shows that they are all reducible to one common description; they all indicate the human limitations of Jesus. The writer himself says that they show that in the person of Jesus we have to do with a completely human being, and that the divine is to be sought in Him only in the form in which it is capable of being found in a man; and that they also prove that He did really exist, and that the Gospels contain at least some absolutely trustworthy facts concerning Him. In the special publication of the *Hibbert Journal* to which reference has already been made, Dr Schmiedel meets the storm of protest which his first statement evoked by saying, ‘I have emphatically said that they (the nine pillar-passages) form merely the ground-plan of what is credible, and that when once the existence of Jesus has been proved by their means then everything in the first three Gospels which agrees with the image of Jesus as founded on the “pillars,” and does not lie otherwise open to objection, is worthy of belief.’

We are not concerned here with the complete statement of these two writers with regard to the Person of our Lord. But we would contend that the very

¹ Article, ‘Gospels.’

The Synoptic Jesus

emphasis they lay upon the humanity makes the divinity the more necessary a conclusion.

The disciples worshipped Jesus as God because the humanity was fully before them, and Deity became to them its necessary interpretation and explanation. How much more must we, upon whom the ends of the world have come, and who see that this human being has recreated the life of man, arrive at the same conclusion! He has accounted for the outstanding features of that life, and in the same presentation has explained its instincts, given reality to its needs, and then fulfilled them. He has become the author and the finisher of faith. He has done more. He has lifted humanity up to God, and He has brought God near to man. Neither of the two great terms, God and man, remain the same now that Jesus has lived and died. In Him each has received a new connotation. Such effects are beyond a merely human cause. We shall be driven to confess the God when man is before us, as Jesus has made us see Him. He is never so truly God as when He is most truly man.¹

¹ So Dr. Du Bose, *The Gospel in the Gospels*, p. 17. 'What Christ was really believed on for, was Himself—what He was as man. It was His divinity indeed, but a divinity manifested or visible to them only in the quality and character of His humanity, in the perfection of His human holiness, in the spiritual power of His human life.'

So also Dr. Sanday, *Life of Christ in Recent Research*, p. 129, speaking of the subdued but intensely human ways in which the Synoptic Gospels express what we call the Deity of Christ, says: 'When we take all these expressions together, we see how they lead up the conclusion that He was really more than man.'

The Christ of the Gospels

This presentation of humanity is given to the Church in the Synoptic Gospels. We shall see that even in their pages it is impossible to eliminate the divinity of our Lord, but we may gladly accept that their emphasis is on the man with whom they walked and talked and came, by way of love, to understand. In trying to set this clearly before ourselves we shall abandon the conventional division into three gospels as we have them, and speak rather of Markan narrative, Matthaean logia, and the Lukan supplement of both. Such indications of the life of Jesus prior to the baptism by John are purely human in setting in so far as they came before the cognizance of men. We need not here consider the marvel of the nativity. We cannot dismiss it in a sentence, as Dr. Percy Gardner does, when he says, 'the miraculous birth is but a myth.'¹ But in considering the impression of Jesus made upon the men of His time we may well recognize that the circumstances of His birth were special in the experience of His mother, and were given by her to the Church only after the resurrection had revealed to her and to others the nature of her wonderful child.

For the rest He is a child; submitted, like every other child of Jewish family, to the ordinances of the Mosaic law; He is subject to His parents, and becomes known as the Carpenter of Nazareth. His relatives evidently consider that they have some right to control His movements, and at a later point they

¹ *Hibbert Jurnal*, 'Jesus or Christ,' p. 46.

The Synoptic Jesus

attempt to do so. The only account they offer of the extraordinary influence which He has upon men, when His ministry is taken up, is the entirely human explanation of what is unaccountable—they think Him mad. The first event which introduces anything remarkable into His history is the baptism. But this was by no means a full and complete revelation. It was severely limited. Whatever the sign given, it was perceived by only two. To the Baptist it was given in part: the voice from heaven apparently was heard by Jesus alone. The twofold sign had upon Him a distinct effect. It marked a real crisis in His life. It gave Him the consciousness that He was called upon to fulfil the functions of a Messiah. He was, however, slow to make any open claim to this, and when He visited Nazareth He was still ‘a man,’ endowed with wisdom, apparently exhibiting extraordinary powers, but still a man—the well-known carpenter whose position in the social life of the place was recognized by all (Mark vi. 2-3). The position which by implication He assumed is that of a prophet, and during all the first part of His ministry this is the description of Himself which He prefers, as it is the one which is generally allowed. He laid no emphasis except in one particular instance, which must be considered, upon the works of power which He performed. He tried to keep them in the background, even to suppress all reference to them. There was no insistence upon supernatural power in the performance of them. The common people might account for them in other ways. Some

The Christ of the Gospels

did account for them, in a way which could not be allowed (Mark iii. 23). During all this early period of the ministry of Jesus one simple phrase is the sufficient description of His life- ‘He went about doing good. He taught in the synagogues, and He healed the sick.’

We shall consider the teaching of our Lord in connexion with the second of the Matthaean records, but of both this and of the works given us in the Markan document we would notice that the motive is to be sought in the sphere of that which is human. They are the outcome rather of a pity which makes a real bond between Him and the men whom thus He blessed, than of a power which places Him in unapproachable regions of absolute Deity. The wonderful works were an expression of personality rather than an exhibition of power. It will be seen presently that this is far from an emptying our Lord of Deity. On the contrary it will be found that His divinity is placed upon a surer basis when it is found in the personality which underlay the humanity, and it removes at once what has always made the difficulty in teaching which represents our Lord as governed by two distinct personalities which, if they do not conflict, at any rate alternate.

‘The old Christology made the problem of Christ’s Person more difficult for itself by its exaggerated conception of the antithesis between humanity and divinity as absolute opposites; and the deeper truth is rather the affinity of the two, the idea of man as *capax infiniti*, essentially akin

The Synoptic Jesus

'to God, rooted in Him, and only realizing the true and complete ideal of his humanity in proportion as he receives and appropriates the divine.'¹

We are nearer the discovery of a true divinity in Christ when we see that His works, wonderful as they were, sprang from the human heart of compassion, which made Him, in the vivid words adopted by the evangelist 'bear our diseases' (Matt. viii. 17). To that pitifulness residing in His human heart Jesus added a complete and explicit dependence upon the power and will of God. There would have been no true obedience in His relation to the Father without this accepted dependence, and this is fully acknowledged in the prayer which He offered by the grave of Lazarus. That prayer shows that even when He speaks with apparent directness, He does so in conscious dependence upon the Father. 'I know,' He says, 'that Thou hearest me always, but because of the multitude which standeth around I said it.'

Whether our Lord accomplished His works of healing by superior knowledge as man, or whether He did in full consciousness use the supernatural power which was always at His command, but which He is described as refusing to use on occasions, we need not inquire. Absolute proof is indeed beyond us, but there is no reason to be afraid of inquiry in this direction, for if it be allowed that special insight and sympathy had enabled Him to effect cures which

¹ Dr. Forrest, *The Authority of Christ*, p. 88.

The Christ of the Gospels

seemed marvellous to His contemporaries, such a contention will only result in making His personality deeper and fuller, and it can never be too often laid down that whatever enriches the personality of our Lord makes His divinity the more inevitable.

So in Christ's attitude to the popular belief in demons, and their power to possess and confuse the consciousness of men, there is no reason why we should burden the story of the Synoptists with theories of accommodation.¹ The probability is that our Lord shared the opinions of His days with reference to this subject. That He should do so only makes His personality the more wonderful. It is clear that in all this class of miracle Christ did not use powers other than those which a man might use. His own disciples 'cast out many devils' (Mark vi. 13). An individual was found who accomplished the same thing although he was not a follower of Jesus (Mark ix. 38), and even those directly opposed to Him seem to have used the power (Luke xi. 19). That there was a certain unique character in His own personal bearing towards such cases we may well

¹ Dr. Sanday, *Hastings' D.B.*, Art. 'Jesus Christ,' p. 624, uses the word 'accommodation' in this connexion, but says that he does not use it as indicating 'a merely politic assumption of a particular belief for a particular purpose. We mean that the assumption was part of the outfit of His incarnate manhood. There was a certain cycle of ideas which Jesus accepted in becoming man in the same way in which He accepted a particular language.' With this we wholly sympathize; but it may be permitted to ask why, then, the word 'accommodation' should be used at all.

The Synoptic Jesus

believe. The evil spirits perceived it, but we may infer from the facts before us that their recognition was of something in Himself and not in the mere act of expulsion. That is to say, in all such acts Christ was differentiated from His disciples and from the generality of men by a certain spirit that characterized Him. The something more must be sought, not in the deed which He performed, but in the man that He was. Far beyond any manifestation of supernatural power which He may have exhibited was that perfect manhood which stamps Him as divine.

It is to be noticed that, in the Synoptic story, from the very earliest days of Christ's ministry, His personality is the prominent factor in each case. We are accustomed to hear that this is a feature which belongs to the fourth Gospel; but it belongs also to the Synoptics, and appears in an increasing ratio up to the last. It is prominent in the teaching where Christ throws His own personal authority into contrast with that of the Mosaic code; His disciples are called to follow Him; in their mutual relations He is the bridegroom, and they only 'the sons of the bridechamber.' Those who would follow Him are told to do so whatever the cost may be, and the condition of following is in the bearing of a cross which is of necessity, while in the eschatological discourses He says 'Whosoever shall be ashamed of Me and of My words . . . of him shall the Son of Man be ashamed' (Mark viii. 38). Quotation from the fourth Gospel is not strictly in place in this chapter, but we

The Christ of the Gospels

may note in passing that in that Gospel Christ is described as claiming authority on the strength of His personality alone, and only when that was found beyond the reach of the faith of His disciples, does He allow an acceptance of Himself 'for the very works' sake' (John xiv. 11).

The confession of Peter at Caesarea, taken with the incident of the transfiguration which closely followed it, marks a second stage in the development of Messianic consciousness in Christ. After this not only does He insist upon His own centrality, not only do the claims He makes for personal allegiance increase, but the idea of suffering and death as features of the Messiahship are accepted by Him. On the mount itself His conversation with the heavenly visitants was of the decease He should accomplish at Jerusalem, and on the way down He repeated the announcement, which He had previously made, of His impending sufferings and death, the important addition of resurrection being made. Again and yet again He returns to the subject, and each time the details of His sufferings are given more fully.¹

If we turn from St. Mark's Gospel to the special section in St. Luke's which is called 'the Perean Document,' containing the more detailed record of His journey up to Jerusalem, the same features again appear. We have an increasing reference to Himself, and rejection of the message of the disciples is equiva-

¹ See Mark viii. 31; ix. 9-12, 31; x. 32-34.

The Synoptic Jesus

lent to the serious matter of rejecting the Christ. It is in the course of this journey (the occasion seems to have been specially marked, Luke x. 22) that He uttered the memorable words, ‘All things have been delivered unto Me of My Father; and no one knoweth who the Son is save the Father, and who the Father is save the Son, and He to whomsoever the Son willeth to reveal Him.’ He claims for Himself a position greater than that of Solomon or Jonah, and asserts that those who deny Him will be denied by Him in the presence of His Father, and that at Jerusalem He will Himself accomplish all things foretold by the prophets concerning the Son of Man. This last phrase now becomes much more common on His lips. In the Gospel of St. Mark, prior to the confession of St. Peter, the phrase is used twice, but after that it appears no less than thirteen times.

Into the use and meaning of this much discussed phrase we cannot enter fully here. Dr. E. A. Abbott sets himself against a formidable body of scholarly opinion when he declares that it is not one of many Messianic titles, and that it is not existent in this use in the whole of Hebrew and early Jewish literature.¹ On the contrary Dalman asserts that ‘the designation was chosen by Jesus of set purpose that the people might transfer their thoughts of the Messiah to Himself.’² and Dr. Gould says ‘this name was to the Jews a Messianic title, only that and nothing more. But Jesus fastens upon it because it identifies Him with

¹ *Message of the Son of Man*, p. 23.

² *Words of Jesus*, p. 251.

The Christ of the Gospels

humanity, and, owing to the generic use of the word "man," with the whole of humanity.¹ Harnack and Nolloth and many others may be quoted to the same effect.² It is to be noticed that our Lord uses this phrase only of Himself, and that occasionally He uses it in the sense of the representative and therefore authoritative man. It is used in the distinctly Messianic sense involved in the claim to have power to forgive sins, and, in the further development of that conception, to suffer that He might ransom and forgive. By far the most impressive pronouncement, however, took place when our Lord was publicly challenged by the high-priest. The assertion made is in terms of Apocalypse, but this only heightens its Messianic reference. The two ideas of the Messiah and the coming of the kingdom were never far apart in the Jewish mind. It was the fashion of this people to express their hopes for the future in what is now recognized as apocalyptic terminology. Christ's use of such language stamps the account with the mark of an authentic utterance. The occasion demanded a formal and impressive declaration, and He makes it in the form which was most natural, which could be easily understood, and was understood. He was asked the direct question (Mark xiv. 61-62) 'Art thou the Messiah, the Son of the Blessed?' and His answer was 'I am; and here-

¹ *Commentary on St. Mark's Gospel*, ii. 10.

² Harnack, *Sayings of Jesus*, p. 239; Nolloth, *The Person of our Lord*, pp. 106-7; Sanday, *Life of Christ in Recent Research*, chapter v.

The Synoptic Jesus

after ye shall see the Son of Man, sitting at the right hand of power and coming with the clouds of heaven.' No further witness was required; the evidence of His claim to Messiahship was complete.

In the story of the paralytic healed by Jesus we have the earliest recorded use of the term. The incident is unique, as it seems to break what was apparently a rule imposed upon Himself by our Lord, at any rate in the earlier period of His ministry, to avoid anything like a public assertion of Messianic claim. It is to be observed, however, that the claim made by Him was to a delegated authority. The word¹ used indicates not an independent use of divine prerogative, but rather that absolute dependence upon the Father's will which was the product of the perfect fellowship that existed between them. At the same time there is no reason to consider that an assertion of Messianic claim would be impossible even thus early in the course of His ministry. The power which had sprung into His consciousness as a personal endowment was evoked in a special manner upon this occasion. The physical neediness of the man, the confidence of the friends who brought him, and the persistence of their 'faith,' together with the hostile challenge of His enemies, made the occasion one in which we should expect some special assertion of that power. It was made confidently and effectively, but in dependence again upon Him from whom He drew the power which His human

¹ ἐξουσία.

The Christ of the Gospels

pitifulness bade Him use. The assertion of Messianic power was possible to Him from the first; it might be used, and was used, when the occasion demanded it; but it was held in the bosom of a great obedience to the Father, apart from whom Jesus did no mighty works. The whole incident is rather an indication of Personality than one of absolute power, and it is in the sphere of Personality that we must look for the true tokens of Deity. That such tokens should increase as the great climax of His complete submission drew near is only what might be expected.

As the transfiguration marked off the second stage in the Messianic consciousness of Jesus, so His entrance into Jerusalem, with the deliberately adopted tokens of the Messiah, marked off the third.

It is remarkable that in each of the three crises in our Lord's ministry the voice from heaven is heard. This third and last occasion occurred when with Christ's assumption of the Messianic insignia came also the knowledge of the complete and final rejection which was then fully formed in the minds of the rulers of His people. But with the rejection of the Jews came also the appeal of the Gentile world represented by the Greeks. Christ realized then more clearly than ever before that His death was close upon Him. While He knew that all that had preceded had led up to that hour, He shrank for one moment from all that was bound up in it. And yet He saw that death was not the end of everything; that it would be followed by larger and richer life; that the corn of wheat would pass through death and burial into

The Synoptic Jesus

abundant fruit; that His new life would be victorious life; that by anticipation, even in that hour, He triumphed over the prince of this world, and from the uplifted life, of which the cross was only a preliminary, He would draw all men unto Himself. All this is supplied by the fourth evangelist, but it is necessary here if we are to fill up the Synoptic story and to account for the far more explicit self-revelation which Christ gives His disciples in the never-to-be-forgotten sanctities of the upper room.

In the eschatological discourses of the Synoptics, and in the last and most intimate discourses with His disciples, and most of all in the institution of the Eucharist, Christ reveals not only a complete claim to the position and offices of the Messiah, but to something which goes beyond that Messianic consciousness which some man of fine and inspired spiritual feeling might have realized. Into the special difficulties which gather round the eschatological discourses of our Lord we shall not enter here.¹ It is to be noticed that the Markan tradition shows that prior to the claim to Messianic honour and office made before the high-priest Jesus had used the same significant words. The Son of Man should come in clouds and great glory; His elect should be gathered from the uttermost part of the earth; that would be the time of redemption for His followers; only let them be prepared and ready to stand before the Son of Man. Such words could have meaning only in so far as those who heard them connected them with

¹ See chapter vi.

The Christ of the Gospels

those passages in their own apocalyptic literature which described the coming of the Messiah to judge the world, and to set up His kingdom.

In the institution of the Eucharist we have finally a position outlined of which there can be no doubt. Our Lord uses words in this connexion which go far beyond a mere commemorative feast. The two terms in the institution are full of significance. In the bread which symbolized His body we have that which, as we have seen, made such demands upon the followers that many walked no more with Him. The twelve, however, had still continued to follow their Master, and in some measure they had understood that in this way He was drawing closer than ever the bond that bound them to Him. It was probably only in after days that they grasped the idea, which St. John afterwards elaborated, that words and symbol alike betokened an intimacy of spiritual communion of which the physical incorporation of bread in the human body was but a type and figure. It is, however, in such words that Jesus claims a spiritual relation beyond what any man could offer to another. The Jews, regarding Him as nothing more than human, had asked, ‘How can this man give us His flesh to eat?’ The question was inevitable and unanswerable except in so far as the spiritual and transcendental side of our Lord is seen and acknowledged; and in the Markan narrative Christ makes nowhere a fuller claim to Deity than He does here.

If the presentation of the first element brings up the whole teaching of St. John, that of the second

The Synoptic Jesus

brings up that of St. Paul. The ransom for many is now set forth in His blood, and it is ‘blood of the covenant.’ Even if the words as given in the Lukan edition of the Markan narrative be considered an addition made under the influence of Pauline teaching, and we read ‘this is My blood of the covenant,’ instead of ‘this cup is the new covenant in My blood,’ yet the reference to a covenant must have thrown Christ’s words into sharp contrast with such words as we find in Exod. xxiv. 8. If the receiving of the blood in symbol was a covenant at all, it was in addition to that which already existed. It was a *new* covenant, even if our Lord never used the word. It stood for a token and pledge of a relation between man and God. It stood for expiation and sacrifice. It stood for the sharing of one common life. Its reference was so far wider, so much more spiritual in application, that St. Paul came easily to see that it had superseded the former covenant with Israel, and that the death on the cross meant life for all the world. The Pauline interpretation may be fuller than that which we find in the Synoptic Gospels, but the teaching so elaborated is in the Eucharistic words by implication. Christ implies by such words that He by His death fulfils and transcends all sacrificial types and shadows known to Israel. In such words resides the authority of conscious Deity. To any one less than divine they had been blasphemy. No man could claim that His death should be both ransom and covenant, breaking the bonds of sin, and creating a new obligation, whose sanction should be a life held in common

The Christ of the Gospels

between Himself and the countless generations of mankind.

Our investigation of the Markan narrative—an investigation which has been of necessity only in outline—has led us to see that if the signs of Deity are to be found in Jesus they belong rather to the side of His personality than to wonderful works in which that personality may have found expression. But if this be so those signs are clear and distinct. There is indeed a certain gradation in the way they appear. A growing consciousness of the marvel of a divine and human Personality is not destructive of the idea of an essential divinity, and if the more explicitly divine claim and appeal of Christ is found to have been expressed towards the close of His earthly course, the story is thereby only stamped with the greater probability.

If our analysis of the sayings of Jesus as they appear in the first and third evangelist is accepted as correct, it follows that they cannot be considered as either historical or apologetic. That is to say, if they were compilations or selections from a considerable body of sayings extant in the earliest Christian community, we cannot be sure, at any rate in the first Gospel, that each individual saying stands in chronological relation to the rest of the story as given in the Gospel. Neither must we look for any outline of systematic theology in the collections as given to us. That they were actually spoken, and that they imply a very noble doctrine of God and the world, no one can fairly dispute. But they do this, not because

The Synoptic Jesus

they were drawn up for that purpose, but because they contain that which our Lord came to impart—a revelation of the knowledge of God and an insistence upon the true human attitude in face of that revelation, namely repentance and faith in Christ.

The emphasis thrown in the Sermon on the Mount upon the Kingdom of God and the Fatherhood of God, even if it stood alone, would be sufficient to give us the germs of that which was afterwards so fully developed by St. Paul and St. John. The two phrases so frequent in the Sermon on the Mount really recall the Jew from the false emphasis which he had placed upon the law of Moses to the true emphasis on the Personal God, who alone gives sanction to moral law. The authority which he had sought in the letter was declared to reside in the spiritual sphere and was to be found in God Himself. Yet this authority was not that of some arbitrary and despotic power. If it belonged to the kingdom of heaven it belonged also to the kingdom of love. For in this the King was the Father also.

Not less significant is the Christology of the sayings recorded. Christ claims for Himself the function of fulfilling the law, and His call to men is to follow Him. In the charge given to His disciples He puts even the sacred relationships of home in a secondary position to that which He claimed. His follower was to leave father and mother to follow Him, and to 'hate' those who were nearest and dearest to himself, 'yea, and his own life also,' or he could not be the disciple of Christ. Life could

The Christ of the Gospels

only be strong and stable in so far as a man received the words of Christ and carried them out in daily life and action. He speaks of Himself as deciding in the judgement of 'that day' the destiny of men. In the eschatological section He pictures Himself as sitting in judgement, and dividing 'the sheep from the goats.' In sending the disciples on their mission of teaching and healing He uses words which imply not only His relation to the world of men, but also His relation to the Father when He says, 'He that receiveth you receiveth Me, and he that receiveth Me receiveth Him that sent Me.' In such words, simple as they may appear, we have all that we are accustomed to find in the fourth Gospel; we have the centrality of the Person of Christ, and the relationship of faith as a 'receiving' of Christ.¹ So rich is this teaching in references to the Person of Christ, references all the more valuable because they are implied rather than distinctly stated, that Harnack for this very reason prefers 'Q' to the Markan narrative as 'authoritative in reference to the Person of Jesus.'²

The use of the title 'Son of Man' occurs all through the logia, and this is indicative of what we have already seen, that the sayings belong to all periods of our Lord's ministry. Had they been arranged in order of time we should have expected

¹ cf. John i. 12: 'As many as received Him, to them gave He the right to become the children of God, even to them that believe on His name.'

² *Sayings of Jesus*, p. 285.

The Synoptic Jesus

that, in conformity with the Markan narrative, the use of the Messianic title would be more frequent towards the close of the ministry. Few passages in the logia are better attested than the passage, 'At that season Jesus answered and said, I thank Thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that Thou didst hide these things from the wise and understanding, and didst reveal them unto babes. Yea, Father, for so it was well pleasing in Thy sight. All things have been delivered unto Me of My Father, and no one knoweth the Son, save the Father; neither doth any know the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son willeth to reveal Him. Come unto Me, all ye that are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn of Me, for I am meek and lowly in heart, and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light' (Matt. xi. 25-30). When we remember that this passage is given also by St. Luke, and that in all probability he used a different collection of logia from that used by St. Matthew, the conclusion is inevitable that this saying belongs to the very earliest record, and that it was widely known. Those critics who refuse to acknowledge anything of a transcendental nature in the earliest records, find this passage a great stumbling-block in their path.¹ One method of dealing with it is to arbitrarily reject it as a Johannine interpolation, but the acceptance of such a principle would leave us without a single saying

¹ Dr. Percy Gardner, *Hibbert Journal*, ut supra, p. 46.

The Christ of the Gospels

of our Lord's which could be accepted as genuine. It is in many respects the most remarkable saying in the Synoptic Gospels. For not only are the terms 'Father' and 'Son' used in a unique sense, but the language used indicates the pre-existence of the Messiah, and claims for Him an intimacy of knowledge, a fullness of intercommunion, shared by no one else.¹ 'There is only one Father and only one Son, constituted, in a manner, by the knowledge that they have of one another, absolute entities the relations of which are almost absolute.'² So also Dr. Sanday: 'The mutual relation of the Father and the Son is expressed as a perfect insight on the part of each, not only into the mind, but into the whole being and character of the other.' Dr. Sanday goes on to say that the course of recent criticism has led him to see that far from this passage being a stumbling-block, it is really the key to any understanding of the Christ of the Gospels. 'If we had not had the passage, we should have had to invent one like it.'

It is just because this transcendental relation lay so close behind the words and methods of the human teacher that the crowd felt that they were face to face with not so much a new doctrine as a new

¹ 'The idea involved in the aorist $\pi\alpha\rho\epsilon\delta\theta\eta$, is that of a pre-temporal act, and carries with it the conception of the pre-existence of the Messiah.' Dr. W. C. Allen, *Commentary on St. Matthew*.

² The Abbe Loisy, quoted by Sanday, *Criticism of the Fourth Gospel*, p. 223. See also Forsyth, *Person and Place of Jesus Christ*, p. 111, and Knowling, *The Testimony of St. Paul to Christ*, p. 293.

The Synoptic Jesus

method of teaching. There was no missing the authority, which in this great saying breaks through the reserve so strictly kept, in the words 'All things are delivered unto Me of My Father,' and so they said, 'He speaketh with authority.' In the saying appears in sharpest form the paradox which continually confronts us in the Person of our Lord. Into the reflections of the Teacher, sad at heart because His message has been rejected, there comes the consciousness that in rejecting Him men reject One who stands to God as no other man can stand; and through both the disappointment and the sense of privilege there speaks the heart of compassion which belongs to the Divine—'Come unto Me, all ye who labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.'

We shall not here attempt anything like an analysis of the parabolic utterances or of the eschatological discourses. We have dealt with both of these elsewhere,¹ and shall only say here that in the use of parable and in the employment of that method of describing the blessedness which He was to bring to the world of man our Lord reveals in the human setting the underlying divinity which belonged to Him. Every instance brought forward of the prevalence of the apocalyptic method in contemporary teaching only makes us see how fully He conformed to that which belonged to the humanity of His time.²

¹ Chapter vi.

² Dr. Sanday, *Life of Christ in Recent Research*, pp. 108–109.

The Christ of the Gospels

Indeed, if no trace of apocalypse had appeared in His teaching we should have suspected that the Gospels were the artificial product of an age other than His own. Their value for us would have proportionately decreased. But now that we see how truly He conformed to that which was of His times, we infer not only that the record is true to fact, but also that the humanity of our Lord was very real.

And yet as we dwell upon the teaching, so truly human in its setting, again there breaks out the something that goes so far beyond the human. The narrow sphere of Jewish national hopes has become immeasurably widened. The 'kingdom' is no longer of this world. The significance of the 'coming'¹ is neither political nor social: it is moral and spiritual. Under the forms, familiar enough in the apocalypses of Daniel and of Enoch, there are two underlying ideas. One is the Personality of the coming King, and the other is the one requirement of faithfulness in His followers. The Jewish Messiah was an idea sufficiently vague and uncertain. In its place we have the historical, personal Jesus describing Himself in the term, self-chosen, which related Him to the human race, yet at the same moment connected Him with that which had been the spiritual hope of His people—'the Son of Man.' The apocalypse of Jesus goes far beyond that of any other of which we read, for in it He claims that He Himself is the Messiah who is to fulfil the

¹ Dr. Sanday, *Life of Christ in Recent Research*, p. 82.

The Synoptic Jesus

vision, and the one condition of victory in those to whom He speaks is that they be faithful to Himself.

We conclude, then, that the Synoptic Jesus is one who is truly man, but of a manhood so complete that it is to be accounted for only in terms of Deity; that the consciousness of the full significance of His own Personality came to our Lord along the human lines of development, and that the records before us are true to fact in thus describing the increasing stress which He laid towards the close of His ministry upon His Messianic office and work, and upon Himself as the means whereby man might enter into that fellowship with God which was at once the deep-seated desire of the human heart as it was also the definite purpose of God.

THE JOHANNINE CHRIST

To me that story—aye, that Life and Death,
Of which I wrote ‘it was’—to me it is;
—Is, here and now: I apprehend nought else.
Is not God now in the world His power first made?
Is not His love at issue still with sin,
Visibly when a wrong is done on earth?
Love, wrong, and pain, what see I else around?
Yea, and the Resurrection and Uprise
To the right hand of the throne—what is it beside,
When such truth, breaking bounds, o'erfloods my soul
And, as I saw the sin and death, even so
See I the need yet transiency of both,
The good and glory consummated thence?
I saw the Power; I see the Love, once weak,
Resume the Power: and in this word ‘I see,’
Lo, there is recognized the Spirit of both,
That moving o'er the spirit of man, unblinds
His eye, and bids him look.

—BROWNING, *A Death in the Desert.*

CHAPTER V

THE JOHANNINE CHRIST

INTERPRETATION of the Person of our Lord began with the beginning of the Christian Church. In the first recorded address of St. Peter on the day of Pentecost we can see that even then the attention of the Church is concentrated upon the great subject. The gaze of its members is directed to both the past and the future. They are considering what their Master meant in the life of their nation and what He meant for the life of the world in the days to come. They found that He gave a new significance to the teaching of their existing scriptures, but this led their wondering eyes into a far-extended vista. The ages of the eternity which lay behind them were opened up, and they saw that all that had happened in their days had come about by 'the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God.' Not less impressive was the relation of their Master to the ages to come. In declaring that God had made Him 'both Lord and Christ' St. Peter claims that the immeasurable possibilities of the Messianic reign

The Christ of the Gospels

were bound up in the Jesus who had been crucified, but who was now risen from the dead. To that reign were now transferred the eschatological ideas common in those days, but with a difference. In their conception of that reign a moral and spiritual reference began to appear, as it had already done in the teaching of their Lord. The exalted Prince and Saviour was to confer upon men the twofold gift of repentance and remission of sin. The blessing to be realized was now to be seen in 'His turning every one of you from his iniquities.' Their repentance was to be 'unto life,' and the whole world was to be admitted to the privilege, for even the Gentiles were to be admitted to 'inheritance among them who might be sanctified by faith in Christ.' When St. Paul took up his more elaborate teaching, the same great notes which we find in the speeches and addresses contained in the Acts of the Apostles appear again. Jesus is 'declared Son of God by the resurrection,' and salvation is 'from sin unto life through faith in Christ.' It is to be noticed that in his earlier teaching (2 Thess. ii. 3-8) St. Paul followed the apocalyptic method, and described the Messianic reign of Christ in terms familiar to the age. He taught that for the moment the working of the man of sin, that mystery of lawlessness, was held in check by a great political power, but that restraint was not to be perpetual, and when it was removed there would be first a revelation of the lawless one in full activity, and then his complete destruction in the manifestation of the 'coming' of the Lord

The Johannine Christ

Jesus. The Church must wait in patience. But the Church found the period of waiting long and trying. There were those who asked, 'Where is the promise of His coming?' Some further interpretation became necessary, and it was given to the Church in the 'spiritual gospel' of St. John.

This additional interpretation does not depart from that already given to the Church in so far as it concerned man's attitude to Christ. The same notes are struck again. The emphasis is laid where both St. Peter, St. Paul, and our Lord Himself had laid it —on that moral life which abandons the works of darkness, and finds fellowship with God through faith in Christ. That emphasis is even increased. But in dealing with the relation of the Person of Christ to the Father there is certainly a great development. The Messiah is the eternal Word. While He belongs to the very being of God, He is God's thought concerning man. The Messianic conflict with the powers of evil is now seen to be the revelation of 'true light' dispelling a darkness which could never hope to overcome it. The triumph of the Christ is now. The victory is already won. Jesus is no less than the innermost heart and meaning and purpose of all that is. He is in Himself light affecting the intellectual consciousness of men, truth affecting his moral nature, and life affecting every process of his nature, so that death itself is already conquered in Him. It only remains now that man make himself one with Christ for him to share in time with the victory which is, in the nature

The Christ of the Gospels

of things, timeless—eternal; man would thus know the truth, and the truth would set him free. The death of Jesus was no temporary defeat of a power destined subsequently to prove triumphant, but rather a pouring forth of life that it might flood the impoverished veins of humanity with the very life of God, and ‘he who believeth on Christ, though he were dead, yet shall he live.’

It is evident that all this marks a great development in the interpretation of the significance of Christ as a Person. We have nothing so explicit in the Synoptics. But this development is no arbitrary imposing of an elaborate theological scheme upon the simple record of a human life. It is the unfolding of what was implicit in the self-revelation of Christ from the first. Not only is there no contradiction between the earliest and this latest presentation of the Person of Christ, there is not even anything which may be called a substantial addition to the latter, with the one important exception of the pre-existence of Christ. With this last the Synoptists had nothing to do, as they only dealt with the manifestation of their Lord on the plane of history. They contented themselves with recording occasional intimations of Deity such as fell from the lips of Christ in the course of His teaching. But this later unfolding of the implicit gospel was inevitable from the first. The Synoptic writers, in delineating the humanity of our Lord, lead up to His divinity. The portrayal of the Son of Man leaves us with One who stood in unique relation to God, and the Christian

The Johannine Christ

Church could not rest there. ‘What think ye of the Messiah? Whose Son is He?’ is a question which from the first pressed for an answer, and in giving his answer St. John continues the history, and brings it to its supplementary but necessary and connected sequel.

Modern critics, it is true, discover little continuity between the one presentation and the other. They seek to justify their position not so much on the ground of differences in the Persons described, or in the incidents of our Lord’s life related on the one hand by St. Mark and on the other by St. John, but rather on the ground that in the Synoptic Gospels there is distinct development, not only in the self-revelation, but also in the self-consciousness of our Lord, as He advances to a full realization of His Messianic function, position, and office; whereas the Johannine Christ is complete from the first. But to make this difference in point of view into a contradiction is no true criticism. It was possible for St. John to accept all that had been given in the Synoptic story, and then to go on to interpret that divinely-human Personality with the presentation of which they had closed. Where they ended he began. The humanity they had depicted made an interpretation in terms of divinity inevitable, and St. John starts with that divinity accepted by the Church in the light of the resurrection, and shows its significance in the realm of faith.

But while the main attention of the writer is held by the transcendental Christ, he none the less pre-

The Christ of the Gospels

sents Him to us in a setting of historic fact. This divine Logos is encompassed with human relationships. He appears in the common life of men, and enters into all the controversy and strife peculiar to His day. The incidents described are evidently carefully chosen. There is a distinctly selective process at work in the mind of the writer. He is not anxious to make his selected facts harmonize with those recorded in the earlier gospels, though he does not hesitate to use such facts, if they illustrate that which he was anxious to set before the Church; but for the most part he chooses other incidents for the unfolding of his great theme. Here again it is unsound criticism which discovers contradiction in this difference of treatment. Dr. Menzies says that 'the situations are as unreal as the discourses, since the one fits the other.'¹ But if the incidents were selected from facts within the cognizance of the writer to illustrate his contention, there is nothing necessarily unreal in the fact that they correspond. There is no reason to consider either as fiction because of correspondence between them. The deeds of Christ recorded by the Synoptists can be brought within the compass of a very short period of time amounting to only a few days. There must have been many others which remained unrecorded by them. If the incidents actually took place, whatever the interpretation may be, there is a true historicity in the Gospel. That St. John, writing, as is evident,

¹ *The Christ of the Fourth Gospel*, pp. 18, 19.

The Johannine Christ

with a definite purpose, should, out of the fullness of his own experience, select those facts in the life of Christ which enabled him to establish his contention only enriches the final presentation. We are not, because of this, presented with the necessary alternative 'Jesus or Christ.' But though the difference of treatment fully explains the emphasis laid upon the transcendental, the fact is that there is a very true humanity before us in the fourth Gospel. Just as in the Synoptic story the glory of Deity breaks from time to time the human environment, so in the Johannine we have a divinity which includes and reveals a very true humanity.

The central idea of the Gospel is that of a divine Sonship. God, to the writer, is always 'the Father.' Only when the relationship is personal to Christ rather than universal to man do we get the more intimate 'My Father.' This Sonship is no mere token of origination. It is unique in character, and timeless so far as origin is concerned. There was no other 'Son' like this one, and He was from all eternity. Even in the beginning He was 'the only begotten Son who is in the bosom of the Father,' and the perfect communion for which this Sonship stood was the most intimate of all. He and the Father were One. Dr E. F. Scott points out here a difference from the Sonship of Christ as depicted in the Synoptics. In these 'His mind was from first to last possessed with the thought of God, to whom He surrendered Himself in entire obedience. In the fourth Gospel the centre of gravity is shifted from

The Christ of the Gospels

the Fatherhood of God to the Sonship of Christ. Jesus is conscious from the beginning of His divine nature, and in virtue of this consciousness He reaches out to God, and claims affinity with Him. His thought of the Father is only the other side of His own self-knowledge; it is derived from it, and serves to illuminate and define it.¹

Such a difference of emphasis, if it be allowed, is entirely in keeping with the different point of view maintained in this Gospel. Both aspects of our Lord's Sonship are true; but the Synoptists, with His humanity in view, would emphasize the relation of submission and obedience, while St. John would dwell upon the fact that the Son was of the same divine essence. This idea is conveyed in many ways, but notably by two expressions. This divine Son is 'God only begotten,' and He is 'in the bosom of the Father' (John i. 18). The one phrase declares His essential being, and the other His relation to the Father as a relation of most intimate and complete communion (John i. 12). To others this divine Logos gives the 'power to become the children of God,' but He Himself is a Son in privilege, and absolutely unique in that relation, while the fellowship which He knows with the Father passes into identification. He is one with the inmost heart of God. No ascription of Deity could go further. And yet, as soon as the Logos appears in the mundane sphere and enters into time relations, the paradox

¹ *The Fourth Gospel*, p. 190.

The Johannine Christ

in Christ's Person which we have discovered in the earlier Gospels is fully maintained. The evangelist shrinks from every suggestion of Doketism. To him the resultant humanity was no semblance, still less a pose. The Word became flesh, and entered into human relations—'tabernacled among us' (John i. 14). It is sometimes claimed that our Lord as described in the fourth Gospel is entirely transcendental. Thus Dr. Menzies says,¹ 'The figure thus presented is not really a human one.' It is difficult to see how this can be maintained. Christ hungers and thirsts; He is weary of travel. He has a definite place of abode, and goes up to the feasts at Jerusalem as any other Jew might do. He enters into the festivities of a village wedding, and weeps with those who mourn at a brother's grave, and dies Himself at last. It may be readily granted that the Person described in this Gospel is divine, but the humanity which is also depicted is as complete as it is artlessly described. The divinity is presented in a setting of human relations. Both human and divine meet in the Christ thus described, and to make the two terms antithetical is to beg the whole question of the Person of Christ.

The Sonship, then, which is here described is precisely that which we have already noticed in the Epistle to the Hebrews. We have found it again in the Epistles of St. Paul, and we have traced it up to the logia of St. Matthew, the earliest document of

¹ *ut supra*, p. 17.

The Christ of the Gospels

which we have any knowledge. But this Gospel enables us to take a further step. Divine as this Sonship is, there is more than Sonship in the Godhead. If there is Sonship there is also, and of necessity, Fatherhood. But the relationship thus indicated is something much deeper and richer than can be discovered in merely human relationships. The Father revealed in this Sonship is much more than a mere progenitor, or benevolent patriarch. The two terms thus posited in the Godhead stand for a perfect union, a common life, a life of love. The Son is ‘in the Father, and the Father in Him.’ ‘I and the Father,’ says Christ, ‘are one.’ The remarkable character of the statement has often been pointed out. ‘One’ is not masculine but neuter, and only by some such use of language could absolute identity between Persons be set forth. The theological importance of the relationship thus described can never be exaggerated.

‘The greatest, the most inestimable gift of Jesus Christ to the religious thought of mankind is the knowledge that within the Godhead stand over against one another, yet in perfect union, the eternal Father and the eternal Son. Fatherhood no more exhausts the conception of the Godhead than does Sonship.’¹

When the Christian Church had grasped the idea that the unity of the Godhead had room within itself for a true diversity, and that this diversity could be expressed in terms of Fatherhood and Sonship, the

¹ Dr. Nolloth, *ut supra*.

The Johannine Christ

doctrine of the Trinity took form. It was but saying in other words that God is love.

This relationship between the Father and the Son is the 'motif' of the fourth Gospel. It appears in most impressive form in the last discourses of our Lord as they are given to us, but it has a very marked place and a very explicit statement in the prologue, where we read that 'The Word was with God.' Now whether the prologue be an introduction or a postscript it is a true preface, for 'it is written after the rest of the work, to sum up and bind together in one mighty paragraph the ideas that are really leading ideas, though scattered up and down the Gospel.'¹ It is still argued by critics that, the writer of the fourth Gospel owes his language, and also his idea of a divine Logos, to the Alexandrian Jew whom we know by the name of Philo. This remarkable man sought to combine the Platonic teaching, the fascination of which he felt, with the Jewish religion to which he still remained faithful. He endeavoured to do so by boldly claiming Platonic teaching to be the echo of the Jewish Moses. In his attempt, however, it must be confessed that there is far more of Plato than of Moses in his conception of an intermediate existence bridging the chasm between God and man. This agency he named the Logos. The word has a happy ambiguity between reason and speech. As such it might be taken for the Platonic idea, or for the Jewish Messiah or the

¹ Dr. Sanday, *The Criticism of the Fourth Gospel*

The Christ of the Gospels

Gnostic emanation. It might be the eternal thought of God concerning man, or it might be that Word finding expression in revelation. To the end, however, Philo's presentation of the Logos has more to do with intellectuality than with personality. That is, it was more Greek than Jewish. For the Hebrew no less than the Greek had his view of the gulf between God and man; he also dreamed of a bridge across the chasm; but this was conceived of in terms of personality. Perhaps its earliest expression is to be found in 'the angel of Jehovah.' But this latter is distinctly what we mean by 'a Person.' He enters into communication with man, appears to him, speaks to him, and receives such replies and pleadings as man may make in reply. In the later writing of the Jews this channel of communication between God and man appears in the form of that 'Wisdom' which is so prominent in 'the Wisdom Literature' of the Jews. But here again it is impossible to ignore the note of personality in the Jewish conception. No one can read, let us say, the eighth chapter of the Book of Proverbs without receiving the impression of One who was in personal fellowship with God on the one hand, and in glad communion at the same time with 'the sons of men.' Even when Philo speaks of the Logos as the 'eldest born of being,' we miss the note of personality which is so prominent in Jewish scriptures. The conception of the Jew was cast in terms of life and history. He moved in a moral sphere of thought. His ascription of such a life to the Eternal was his great contribu-

The Johannine Christ

tion to the religious thought of the world. It was the strong, clear grasp of this as essential in the Being of God which fitted the Jew to receive the supreme revelation of the Father in the incarnation of the divine Son. Philo would have left us with a philosophy. The Jew has given us a religion. The term Logos is not unknown in the Old Testament in describing divine revelations to man,¹ but if we set these aside we have left to us this, that both Philo and the writer of this Gospel found the word current in the religious discussions of their time.² The one used it to connote an abstraction; the other to describe a divine Person, a mediator between God and man.

'The propriety of the word logos consists in the manner in which it distinguishes the principle of the universe from God, while at the same time identifying it with Him. . . . The beginning of all distinction between a pantheistic and a theistic conception of the world lies in the recognizing the world as the expression, not of God Himself, or as we say "of His substance"—but of His Logos, His Thought, Will, Word. The Logos of God, then, is not God ($\delta\theta\epsilon\circ\varsigma$) we distinguish Him, and yet certainly the Logos is God ($\theta\epsilon\circ\varsigma$) we identify Him.'³

We can see how the writer of the Gospel keeps the distinction before his mind in the most marvellous

¹ See Gen. vii. 16, xxi. 20, xxviii. 21; and Deut. iii. 2, iv. 24.

² See also above on *The Odes of Solomon*, chap. iii. p. 115.

³ Du Bose, *The Gospel in the Gospels*, pp. 253, 283.

The Christ of the Gospels

way. It would have been easy for him to have slipped into the language of Pantheism, but he maintains throughout the great thought that mastered him, the thought of One who was God and yet was with God; of One who was the life of men, and yet came to His own and was not received.

There is thus set forth in this remarkable prologue a double union. This Word is related on one side to God, and on the other to humanity. The writer adopts the language of Greek speculation, but he infuses the terms with the entirely Jewish idea of personality in that Wisdom, whom 'the Lord possessed in the beginning of His way, and who was daily His delight, rejoicing always before Him.' He then proceeds throughout this Gospel to show that this 'Reason-Wisdom' was no other than the Jesus who entered into human relationships and conditions, and was crucified at last in the place called Golgotha. But both in the prologue and throughout the body of the Gospel the relationship between the Father and the Logos is one in which union is so close that identification becomes an inevitable conclusion. 'The Word was God.'

Not less intimate is the union between the Logos and the world. The cosmological reference is as marked as is the theological. 'All things were made by Him, and without Him was not anything made' (John i. 3). 'That which hath been made was life in Him,¹ and the life was the light of men. He was the

¹ δὲ γέγονεν ἐν αὐτῷ ζωὴ ἡμῶν. See R.V. margin.

The Johannine Christ

true light which lighteth every man coming into the world. He came unto all that world of things which was His own, and of His fullness we all received.' Here again it is quite unnecessary to suppose that this is a crude adoption of Gnostic cosmogony. The whole conception belongs to the Jewish conception of a personal Wisdom in fellowship with the Eternal —of One who was 'by Him as a master-workman rejoicing in His habitable earth, and His delight was with the sons of men.' This Wisdom comes with an appeal for acceptance by those who are the children of Wisdom, and the declaration taken up and enforced so often in the Gospel is made, 'Whoso findeth Me findeth life . . . all they who hate Me love death.' Such language, repeated as it is in the fourth Gospel, indicates far more than the interest of a benefactor or patron. There breathes in it the spirit of One who is closely connected with the world of creation. That world is His own, and He appeals for recognition and acceptance. It is the language of love expressing love's eternal yearning for that fellowship which is life indeed. 'Fellowship in the Life Eternal'—such is the theme of the prologue. It is a fellowship actually realized on the side of Deity, and in these last days made possible to man. To make it real for man the divine Logos came, was manifested, and dwelt among us, a true Son of Man. It is significant that in this 'spiritual gospel' the title which had so much apocalyptic reference in the Synoptic Gospels should appear so frequently as it does. It occurs twelve times, but with a marked

The Christ of the Gospels

deepening of meaning. In the earlier Gospel its use by our Lord constituted a claim to the fact that in Himself He fulfilled Messianic ideals, but here the point of view is rather from that of Deity and its reference is to the reality of His humanity. For this reason, where the human Sonship is declared there is generally a reference to the more essential glory of divinity. In iii. 13 we have the remarkable statement, if the reading may be accepted, that this Son of Man not only descended out of heaven, but that He is 'in heaven,' and even more markedly still in xiii. 31 our Lord is represented as saying, 'Now is the Son of Man glorified, and God is glorified in Him' (John v. 27). Again, because He is the Son of Man, authority is given Him 'to execute judgement.' Here the humanity itself becomes the basis of the glory. In other passages the glory might have been conceived to be apart from the humanity, a thing of divine prerogative; but in this statement the humanity itself is transfigured. Christ's right to judge the world is found in His having, in obedience to the divine will, made Himself one with the race of man. He knows its frailty, but He knows also that that frailty may issue in triumphant victory over the world. He knows man's highest and his lowest, and by reason of His fellowship with man is qualified to be his judge. This idea of One whose essential divinity finds a true complement in fellowship and communion with man runs throughout the Gospel. It forms the only sufficient unity for the impressive

The Johannine Christ

statement in which the key-words of the Gospel are used to define our Lord's Personality. When He says 'I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life,' the one connotation which binds together the great trilogy is that of a divine communion in which man may find a law for conduct, a permanent basis for faith, and a power to become himself a quickening influence in the world. In the parable of the vine the idea of communion is prominent, and is set forth as the secret of fruitfulness and joy. It entails, indeed, a fellowship of suffering, but it carries with it the assurance of a victory already complete in Christ. In all the teaching concerning the Paraclete, in which it is sometimes hard to distinguish between the indwelling Spirit and the indwelling Christ, the same idea is repeated again and again. 'The Comforter shall be in you, shall abide with you for ever. I will not leave you orphans, I come unto you.' We—the Father and the Son—'will come and make our abode' with the disciple whose love is shown in obedience.

It is, however, in the Eucharistic teaching of the sixth chapter that the deepest note is struck. Here again the emphasis is upon the Son of Man. 'Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, ye have no life in you.' The humanity is real; there is no room here for the mere mirage, which was all that the Docetist saw; but that human-divine Personality was to be received by man into an intimate fellowship, the reality of which, as well as the completeness of which, is indicated by terms of

The Christ of the Gospels

physical incorporation—eating and drinking. So wonderfully does the writer weave together the two strands with which he works—a personal fellowship in God, and a divine fellowship with man made possible in the historic Person of the Son of Man. Just because the Eternal Logos has identified Himself with our humanity we are enabled to make ourselves one with God :

And we the life of heaven may know,
For God is manifest below.

The Gospel, however, does not consist of a mere declaration of the possibility of union with God in and through the Word that was made flesh. It supplies a definition or description of that union, and it does so in characteristic manner by its choice of terms. The fellowship is set before us in terms of knowledge.

The word used in this Gospel for ‘knowing’ seems from its use to be almost interchangeable with that by which the writer describes the act of faith. In vi. 69 and x. 38 the two verbs are thrown together in a striking collocation from which it would appear that the true content of knowledge is that more often indicated by ‘faith.’ It is that intimate knowledge which is born of spiritual fellowship, and which more than anything else indicates the perfect sympathy in which the heart of one lies open to another. It is a conception which belongs to the Hebrew much more than to the Greek. It tells us that the author was steeped in Jewish ideas rather than that he was phrasing the ideas common in the Platonic school of

The Johannine Christ

Alexandria. The 'knowledge of the Lord' in the Old Testament spells love and communion far more than intellectual apprehension. The Psalms are full of the idea that there is a knowledge, as between God and man, which stands for oneness of thought and purpose and love. This differentiates the writers' use of the word from that which was common in Gnostic schools. It has been said that the evangelist is sympathetic towards Gnosticism. 'He has been influenced, more or less directly, by the tendency to construe religion as a "gnosis,"'¹ a higher type of knowledge which is revealed rather to the wise and prudent than to babes.' But as Dr. Scott himself points out, the evangelist is careful to abstain altogether from the use of the noun 'gnosis,' which might have been interpreted in an esoteric sense. He uses the verb throughout, and laying emphasis upon an act the basis of which lies in the individual will, he has by this simple yet significant change separated himself entirely from the Gnosticism of his age. Similarity of language, even if it be closer than we find it here, need not indicate an identity of teaching. Just as St. Paul filled the Gnostic term 'pleroma' with a new meaning, just as this same evangelist uses the Alexandrian term LOGOS with a connotation foreign to both Plato and Philo, so does he now use this verb to indicate that knowledge of a person which goes far beyond a mere intellectual grasp of facts concerning a person. It may, of course.

¹ Dr. E. F. Scott, p. 98.

The Christ of the Gospels

be said that ultimately even knowledge of a person, which makes 'hearts of one another sure,' may be reduced to an act of mental perception, but it is equally certain that into such knowledge there comes much more than the mentality with which we grasp this fact or that. This knowledge represents the infinitely varied play of one personality upon another, culminating at last in the confidence and trust in which one heart is laid open to another, while that other, in desire to appropriate the personal life thus offered, makes the exchange of love in an act of self-surrender. This mutual self-communication is far removed from the esoteric and wholly intellectual knowledge of the Gnostic. When our Lord speaks of the knowledge that exists between the Father and the Son, when He offers Himself as the object of such knowledge to His disciples, or distinguishes between their knowledge and that of 'the world,' it is obvious that He refers to something that belongs to the more spiritual side of life. The only connotation of the word which will serve is that which denotes an intimacy of feeling, a self-communication, a giving and taking of personal life, which is all bound up for us in the one word 'communion.' There are, indeed, passages in which the word is used with its usual connotation of intellectual apprehension, but such passages present as the object of knowledge some fact or statement and not the Person of Christ. To interpret those passages in which our Lord or the Father is presented as the object of knowledge, a moral and spiritual reference is necessary. Know-

The Johannine Christ

ledge, as it is here used, stands for spiritual vision, for sympathy, for union. It is all but synonymous with both faith and love. When we have seen this we are not surprised that the second term used to describe communion with God in Christ is 'Life.' This is indeed the great word of the fourth Gospel, and it is significant that the point of view is that of a life communicated and shared, laid down by Christ and possessed by the believer. This does not imply that the view of our Lord's life and death as mediatorial and redemptive is absent from the Gospel. On the contrary, they are set forth in striking figures. He is the Paschal Lamb, bearing away the sin of the world (John i. 29). He is to be lifted up like the serpent in the wilderness, that whosoever believeth may in Him have eternal life (John iii. 14). He is to die, not only for the Jews, but also for the children of God that are scattered abroad (John xi. 52). He lays down His life and freely bestows it for His sheep (John x. 11). The bread which He will give for the life of the world is His flesh, and 'he that eateth Me shall live because of Me' (John vi. 51). The criticism which asserts that the mediatorial aspect of Christ which appears in the First Epistle of St. John is missing from the fourth Gospel can do so only by ignoring what is implied in these and other passages. If the redemptive work of Christ is not dwelt upon and expanded in this Gospel, it is because the writer considers here not so much the fact as the effect. He starts from the history, and explains its significance. He is not so much concerned

The Christ of the Gospels

with the dying of Jesus as with the issue of that death. He tells us that death means life—life for all mankind. Just as when he deals more specifically with the Person of our Lord, so here, he does not relate so much as interpret fact.

What, then, is this ‘Life’? Even in Old Testament times prophet and psalmist were feeling after some view of life which should satisfy their religious feeling more fully than that which presented it to the mind as mere existence. It is upon the mountains of Zion that the Lord commanded the blessing, even life for evermore (Ps. cxxxiii. 3). The children of men take refuge under the shadow of His wings (Ps. lvii. 1). He makes them drink of the river of His pleasures, for with Him is the fountain of life (Ps. xxxvi. 9). Man lives by every word of God (Deut. viii. 3), and the righteous man shall live by his faith (Hab. ii. 4). This last statement is perhaps the most striking in the Old Testament in this connexion. St. Paul found it so much to his mind that he adopted it as the *motif* of his Epistle to the Romans (Rom. i. 17), and if he emphasized the faith which was the appointed means, he nevertheless shows how the life, thereby secured, culminates in an inheritance of God in which man participates with Christ Himself, and—‘Who shall separate?’ ‘Your life,’ he says in another epistle, ‘is hid with Christ in God, and Christ is that life.’ It is this view of life as a spiritual union with God upon which St. John also dwells. In the frequently quoted passage from the seventeenth chapter it is defined in

The Johannine Christ

terms of that 'knowledge'¹ which, as we have already seen, connotes that committing of one's very self to another, which is as much as can be said in describing the union and communion of personal life.

The Gospel begins with the declaration that life was to be found in the divine Logos, and in the passage which is the true close of the Gospel it is stated that the evangelist has written as he has done in order that through faith we may have life in the name of Christ, that is by entering into fellowship with all that Christ stands for, by union with 'His Name.' 'Communion with God in Jesus Christ'—such is the only true connotation of the word 'life' as it is used in this Gospel, and the connotation justifies the term. For if ever the world arrives at a generally accepted definition of life, it will be in terms of love and communion. Life in its highest effects, as in its deepest experience, is realized in the consciousness that the processes of living have reached their consummation, that the river has reached its bourne, and is lost in that

Deep where all our thought is drowned.

That this is possible through faith in Jesus Christ

¹ Dr. Scott (*op. cit.* pp. 251, 256), denies that this passage contains a definition of life, but it is difficult to see in what other terms a definition could have been introduced. Such an explanation of the passage as Dr. Scott offers may be substantiated if, as he says, 'the intellectual moment lies at the centre of the Johannine interpretation of knowledge.' This, however, should be proved, and not assumed.

The Christ of the Gospels

the writer of this priceless Gospel puts before us. He draws back for us the veil that hides the face of Deity. We catch a glimpse of ineffable life in the bosom of the Father realized in fellowship with the Eternal Son, and from that deepest, most secret source of life there come to us the words of eternal love, ‘Because I live ye shall live also’ (John xiv. 19). By the time this Gospel was received, as it was without question by the early Church, the narrow Messianism of the Jewish Christian Church was broadened into a world-wide Christianity—a Catholic Church; the apocalyptic language of the Jew was filled with a new, a spiritual content, and the Son of David was seen to be ‘God—only-begotten, full of grace and truth.’

But the writer does not leave us with the vision of fellowship with God made possible in Jesus Christ, yet too remote for man in his conscious weakness to seek it. This Mystic is the most practical of men. He sets before us not only the object but the means of its attainment, and what man’s despair had thought remote he shows to be near. He does so, according to his method, by a marked use of terms in themselves familiar enough.

The theme of the fourth Gospel has been put before the world in many forms. The many attempts to set forth the unity of this Gospel indicate an established conviction that its composition has been effected on a distinct plan; that it is no fortuitous throwing together of recorded events, but that a selective process is in evidence throughout, and that a definite pur-

The Johannine Christ

pose is before the writer. That purpose is indeed declared in explicit terms. 'These things are written,' we read, 'that ye might believe that Jesus is the Messiah the Son of God, and that believing ye might have life in His name' (John xx. 31). The same note is struck at the very commencement of the Gospel. The Baptist gave his testimony in order that men might believe through Him who was the true Light (John i. 7), and to them that 'believe in His name' the right was given to become the children of God. In the second chapter the exercise of this faith is set forth, and a difference is shown between the faith realized by those whose allegiance our Lord knew to be defective and the response of faith which He might have made but did not, 'because He knew what was in man.' Then from this point the Gospel goes on to show the working of faith and no-faith; the one in His disciples and followers, culminating at last in the outburst of St. Thomas, 'My Lord and my God' (John xx. 28), which Christ accepts as a tribute of faith, and the other in the Jews, culminating in the rejection and crucifixion of Jesus. The thought which runs throughout the Gospel is this, that the condition of attaining to that fellowship which is life, is faith. But here we are bound to notice a certain characteristic in the phraseology of the evangelist which is full of significance. Although 'faith' is the theme of the Gospel, and although a term for describing it occurs no less than eighty-nine times, not once does the writer use the substantive. On every occasion he uses the verb. But further,

The Christ of the Gospels

in his use of the verb he shows a strong preference for a construction which is found neither in classical Greek nor in the Septuagint. His favourite expression is one which may be literally rendered 'believing into Christ,'¹ or, as an equivalent, 'believing into His Name.' In one passage the phrase is significantly varied. In i. 12 we read 'to as many as received Him . . . even to them that believe on His name,' where it is obvious that the 'receiving' of a Person is set before us as the equivalent of 'believing' as John conceived it. Another significant alteration is found in iii. 36, 'He that believeth on the Son hath eternal life, but he that obeyeth not the Son shall not see life,' a passage which teaches us that an act of faith is also an act of obedience, as St. Paul also teaches us (Rom. i. 5, cf. also xi. 20 and 30).

The Gospel was written at a time when faith was hardening into creed, and the evangelist apparently wrote to recover the true meaning of this all-important principle of spiritual life. Faith, he tells us, does not belong primarily to the sphere of the intellectual. The act which brings us into living contact with Christ is not the endorsement of a formula. It is an act, and an act of submission. It means the submission of obedience; it is realized when we commit ourselves to Christ that He may commit Himself to us (John ii. 24). It is a moral act; for all the significance of the will is bound up in it. We yield

¹ πιστεύειν εἰς Χριστόν.

The Johannine Christ

ourselves up to Him, and in receiving Him we enter upon that life which is union and communion with the Father in the Son.¹

It is no wonder that such a Gospel received at once the endorsement of the Christian Church. It was only when a bare scholasticism sought to reduce to formulas, which the human mind might easily grasp, this picture of a transcendental Christ, that the difference between this Gospel and that of the Synoptists seemed to offer them an opportunity of questioning both its genuineness and authenticity. Yet it would be indeed an impoverished gospel that would remain to us if this inspired interpretation of the life of Jesus Christ were refused authority, for it contains the very heart of the gospel itself, the way to the Father, the means whereby man may find his true home in God through Jesus Christ.

If ye demur, this judgement on your head,
Never to reach the ultimate angels' law,
Indulging every instinct of the soul
There where law, life, joy, impulse are one thing.

¹ So Dr. Adams Brown, *Outlines of Christian Theology*, p. 381: 'Faith in the Christian sense may be defined as the personal commitment of self to the unseen but living God as He is revealed in gracious character in Christ the Saviour of men. It is not simply belief, though it involves an intellectual element in the recognition of God's character as revealed in Christ. It is an act of the will, which involves the commitment of self to God in trust, and has its expression and evidence in obedience. . . . The test of true faith is obedience. Apart from this we may have belief in the sense of intellectual assent; we cannot have the trust which is essential to religion.'

So also Dr. H. Scott Holland, *Lux Mundi*, pp. 17, 18.

THE HIGHER SYNTHESIS—
JESUS CHRIST

THE doctrine of Christ's Person will be determined at any time, partly by the view taken of the facts of His earthly life and ministry, partly by the conception of the relation of God and man which these facts suggest. Without the historic basis Christology becomes abstract and barren; without the speculative development it remains shallow and inconsistent.

DR. ADAMS BROWN, *Christian Theology in Outline*, p. 326.

Would I suffer for him that I love? So wouldest thou—
so wilt thou:
So shall crown thee the topmost, ineffablest, uttermost
crown—
And thy love fill infinitude wholly, nor leave up nor
down
One spot for the creature to stand in. It is by no
breath,
Turn of eye, wave of hand, that salvation joins issue
with death.
As thy love is discovered almighty, almighty be proved
Thy power, that exists with and for it, of being
beloved.
He that did most shall bear most; the strongest shall
stand the most weak.
'Tis the weakness in strength that I cry for! my flesh
that I seek
In the Godhead! I seek, and I find it. O Saul, it shall
be
A face like my face that receives thee; a man like to
me
Thou shalt love and be loved by for ever; a hand like
this hand
Shall throw open the gates of new life to thee. See
the Christ stand!

R. BROWNING, *Saul*.

CHAPTER VI

THE HIGHER SYNTHESIS—JESUS CHRIST

IN July 1909 the editors of the *Hibbert Journal* published a supplementary volume bearing the title 'Jesus or Christ?' The genesis of that volume and its contents are well known and need not be discussed here. But the title serves to bring before us the question to which our examination of the gospel record now brings us. Professor Percy Gardner says, in the essay which forms his own contribution to the volume referred to: 'The picture drawn in the Synoptic Gospels is of One who partook in every way of human nature, and was bounded by human limitations.' Apparently Professor Gardner does not allow that features of our Lord in the Synoptic Gospels which belong to the category of things transcendental can be genuine. He speaks of the passage in the eleventh chapter of St. Matthew, 'All things have been delivered unto Me of My Father: and no one knoweth the Son save the Father, neither doth any one know the Father save the Son, and he to whom the Son willeth to reveal Him,' as 'a patch of alien stuff in a garment,' and he says that, such

The Christ of the Gospels

sayings being common in the Christian Church, we must not be surprised that a few 'should make their way into the text.' But he then goes on to speak of another range of facts, 'facts of history and facts of experience, which are as undeniable, and have as good a right to demand explanation, as those on which so far we have dwelt.' He finds those in the spiritual experience of men who

'Have lived in conscious relation with a divine power; they have been members of a great spiritual communion, and they have all declared that this life had its source not in themselves, but in the divine spring of power and light which from age to age inspires the Christian Church, and makes it capable of redeeming the world from sin. Now the first range of phenomena of which I have spoken is summed up in the word 'Jesus': the second range of phenomena is summed up in the word 'Christ.'

We need not examine the phraseology of this passage too closely. We need not, for example, ask whether it is a fact that the Christian Church holds that it is itself 'capable of redeeming the world from sin.' Accepting as a general statement the antithesis to which Professor Gardner leads us, we have to ask whether the antithesis may be resolved; whether there is a unity which may cover the two terms, and give us a worthy synthesis. To such a question the Christian Church, driven to account for the influence it exerted, as well as for the claim it made, has replied with no uncertain voice. After three centuries of conflict and persecution a

The Higher Synthesis—Jesus Christ

great and historic statement was formulated, and the Church has never withdrawn from the words of the Nicaean Creed—‘I believe . . . in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of God, begotten of His Father before all worlds, God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God, begotten not made, Being of one substance with the Father, by whom all things were made: who for us men, and for our salvation, came down from heaven, and was incarnate by the Holy Ghost of the Virgin Mary, and was made man, and was crucified for us under Pontius Pilate.’

But the difficulty of finding a suitable expression of the union of the two natures in the person of Jesus Christ felt in the early centuries continues to our time. The two schools represented by Antioch and Alexandria are perpetuated down the ages. The former concentrated attention on the human element; it emphasized the completeness of this, even if doing so entailed the implying a separate Personality. The Alexandrian school, on the other hand, emphasized the divine element in the Person of our Lord. The transcendental features of that Person were those which held their attention. So in our days we have on the one hand those who concentrate on the element of historicity in the gospel message. The humanity of Christ is the only thing for which they care to contend; anything which savours of the transcendental is at once received with suspicion. To these Christianity stands for the ethical teaching of a certain Jewish prophet known by the name of

The Christ of the Gospels

Jesus. Christ's union with the Father is one of moral purpose, and while this is acknowledged to be unique, more than such a union as this is not conceded. Everything concerned with what is called 'the Personality of Christ' is translated into terms of thought and idea. The union of the two natures is another way of describing Humanity, and this last is the true worker of miracles. It is Humanity that dies and rises again, and ascends to heaven. Others, again, come near to the Doketism of ancient days. Their insistence upon the divinity of Christ causes them to reduce the humanity to a minimum. It threatens to become a mere pretence; the human life of our Lord seems to be a part acted, rather than the unqualified expression of a real human personality.

It is possible that the Christian Church will never be able to frame a definition that will perfectly express the complete fusion of two natures, one human and one divine. We shall see presently that an attempt is being made to explain the relations of the two on the lines of modern psychology; but even if that attempt should prove successful, we shall be still far from a definition. At present it must be confessed that the current runs strongly in the direction of emphasizing the human to the exclusion of the divine. The rise of the eschatological school is a sufficient indication of this. Now although the conclusion of this school cannot be accepted, the tendency need not be deplored. For it implies that it is now seen that to account for Christianity as the

The Higher Synthesis—Jesus Christ

prevalence of a moral idea, or even the increasing range of a moral power, is hopeless. To account for the teaching we must account for the teacher. The movement is in reality a return to the Person of Christ. What had this Jewish Prophet whom we know by the name of Jesus to use which gave the primary impulse to this still unspent power?

The constant problem afforded by Christianity is clearly before Dr. Schweitzer. ‘Jesus means something to our world, because a mighty spiritual force streams forth from Him, and flows through our time also. This fact can neither be shaken nor confirmed by any historical discovery. It is the solid foundation of Christianity.’ The question then remains—what is the spring and source of this spiritual stream? The answer, as Dr. Schweitzer conceives it,¹ is now before us. It is ‘thorough-going eschatology.’ The English version of Dr. Schweitzer’s work is prefaced by an introduction written by Dr. Burkitt. In this preface we are told that

‘We are beginning to see that the apocalyptic vision, the new age which God is to bring in, is no mere embroidery of Christianity, but the heart of its enthusiasm. And therefore the expectations of vindication and judgement to come, the imagery of the Messianic feast, the ‘other-worldliness’ against which so many eloquent words were said in the nineteenth century, are not to be regarded as regrettable accretions foisted on by superstition to the pure morality of the original gospel. These ideas are the Chris-

¹ Dr. Albert Schweitzer, *The Quest of the Historical Jesus.*

The Christ of the Gospels

tian hope, to be allegorized and ‘spiritualized’ by us for our own use whenever necessary, but not to be given up so long as we remain Christians at all.’

In the volume of essays published at Cambridge by Dr. Swete, the subject is again dealt with by Dr. Burkitt. In his essay entitled ‘The Eschatological Idea in the Gospel,’ he says that eschatology may be resolved into ‘the doctrine of a good time coming.’ He further says that this belief in a good time coming and the Jewish popular expectation of the kingdom of God are very much the same thing, and that this formed the substance of Christ’s preaching. He then goes on to say that

‘The question whether Jesus Himself expected the kingdom of God to come in power before the generation among which He lived had passed away, whether He expected that Caiaphas would see the Son of Man sitting on the right hand of Power and coming on the clouds of heaven, is only difficult for those who believe in the Divine Mission of Jesus. Those who do believe, and who feel nevertheless that the apocalyptic, eschatological idea is a baseless dream, feel compelled to reject the evidence before them, and to explain the words away. In the process the historical personality of our Lord fades into an intangible mist that cannot stand the light of day.’¹

It is clear from this that the securing of the historical personality of our Lord is the great object before those who advance this new view, and this is pure gain.

¹ *Cambridge Biblical Essays*, p. 210.

The Higher Synthesis—Jesus Christ

It is something to be welcomed by all. If, however, this can only be done at the sacrifice of the proper divinity of our Lord, then it is clear that we are as far as ever from accounting for the union of the two natures, and the unity of our Lord's personality is only secured by the sacrifice of His Godhead.

The word 'eschatology' carries us back to a remarkable period in religious history. In the last two centuries of Judaism there sprang up a literary fashion among the Jews; it was the distinct product of the times in which they lived. National hopes and religious aspirations had been all but crushed out of the Jews under the advance of great Empires. By the days of Antiochus Epiphanes the old order of prophetical teachers had come to an end, and the call to moral and social reform had died away. Under such circumstances the religious imagination of the Jew came to the support of his hope, and produced the series of apocalypses, represented in the Old Testament canon by the Book of Daniel and by sections in other prophetic writings. Their features are strongly marked. They describe the conflict of the age in which they were produced, the overthrow of the element hostile to their hopes, the woes which were to precede the coming of the Messiah, and the final judgement and destination of the ungodly. The immediate supremacy of the power they thus denounced and whose destruction they foretold made it expedient that such works should be anonymous, and that persons and events should be represented by symbol. In the New

The Christ of the Gospels

Testament the same tendency is exhibited in part by St. Paul, but more fully in the book which we know under the name of 'The Revelation of St. John the Divine.'

Now it is claimed that Jesus was but another of these apocalypticists; that when He taught that the kingdom of heaven was at hand, He merely predicted the approach of the catastrophe already impending, in which the evil conditions of 'this wicked and adulterous generation' should be subverted, and the supernatural reign of the Messiah set up. In this reign His own triumph as Son of Man would be complete, and His followers would be advanced to positions of great dignity and authority. The course of time proved that in all this He was mistaken, but the impulse set up by the expectation of what Dr. Burkitt calls 'a good time coming' was sufficient to create that spiritual process which we call Christianity. The death of Christ was no 'atonement,' but the despairing acceptance of death by one who saw that this was the inevitable effect of His teaching, and of His protest against the hypocrisy and other evil of His time. 'Jesus died upon the cross with a loud cry, despairing of bringing in the new heaven and the new earth. That is the real tragedy; and not a tragedy to be dismissed with a theologian's sigh, but a liberating and life-giving influence, like every great tragedy. For in its death-pangs eschatology bore to the Greek genius a wonder-child; the mystic, sensuous, early Christian doctrine of immortality,

The Higher Synthesis—Jesus Christ

and consecrated Christianity to take the place of the slowly dying civilizations of the ancient world.¹

It may be freely acknowledged that this teaching has not only recalled our attention to its true objective, the Person of our Lord, but that it has also vindicated the historical character of much that others had eliminated. The Jesus whom it sets before us is one who speaks and acts as one of His own time. But all such interpretation is based upon a very partial view of the facts with which it deals, and its method is open to very serious question. Eschatology was not the only feature of Judaism. Jesus has His reference to the whole system of sacrifice still practised in His day. The priesthood still suggested a mediatorial work which Jesus claimed to fulfil, and while the phrase 'the kingdom of heaven' may be watered down into the 'good time coming,' yet that interpretation obscures what had been part of the religious aspirations of Israel long before the apocalyptic method came into vogue, and that was the Theocratic King.

To exclude all such ideas, and to limit investigation to eschatology alone, does not indicate any comprehensive view of the religious thought of the age in which Jesus lived. The method adopted in establishing this contention is that which is followed by all who accept a merely humanitarian view of the Person of Christ.² Eschatologists, like the rest,

¹ Dr. Schweitzer, *ut supra*.

² See Dr. Garvie's Essay, *Hibbert Journal Supplement*, pp. 177–178.

The Christ of the Gospels

select from the record that which harmonizes with their theory, and reject that which does not. Any statement of what Jesus did or said which may not fit in with the original assumption is brushed aside as ‘an interpolation,’ ‘a Paulinism,’ or ‘a scrap of oral tradition.’ Ancient or modern theological explanation is dismissed merely because it is ‘theology,’ and any attempt to explain the deeds and words of Jesus in the light of a true human Personality, advancing through perfectly natural stages to the consciousness of an infinite depth and meaning in Himself, is described as a psychological interpretation for which there is no evidence whatever in the Scripture. ‘Mark does not offer any psychological analysis of our Lord’s Person,’ and that settles the matter. Any attempt to apply the most ordinary canons of exegesis to the account of Christ’s words or works is dubbed ‘unhistorical,’ and rejected accordingly. Mark himself, we are told, is the most unhistorical of all who have ever attempted to write the life of Jesus. His disconnected statements, his many inconsistencies, do not reveal the historian. The declaration of expected and redemptive suffering which he put into the lips of Jesus is doctrinal and unhistorical, as is the expectation of the pouring forth of the Spirit. This insistence upon the lack of historicity in the record is apparently built upon the basis of ‘the incompleteness of the narrative as a Life of Jesus.’ Yet a true historical criticism of the documents in question really makes such a basis impossible. We have seen that

The Higher Synthesis—Jesus Christ

the Markan narrative consists of memoirs of St. Peter preaching. The incidents find their place either in the preaching or in the memoirs, as the occasion demanded. Both the preacher and his amanuensis would dwell now upon one, and now upon another. The idea of a scientifically constructed 'Life of Jesus' occurred to neither of them. To search in such 'memoirs' either for psychology or for detailed and connected accounts of Christ's words or deeds reveals a method the reverse of scientific. Such guns may be turned round upon those who lay them, and it may be claimed that to neglect the history of the documents, to ignore the manner and motive of their compilation, is as unhistorical a method as can very well be followed. Apparently as soon as we have learned to consider Christ in terms of 'apocalypse,' the paradox is established that these 'unhistorical' documents contain a true history. But it is the history of a vision, rather than that of a person, which we are to discover in the gospel. 'Not the historical Jesus, but the spirit which goes forth from Him, and in the spirits of men strives for new influence and rule, is that which overcomes the world.'¹

Against this it is sufficient to place the words of Harnack: 'Above all, the tendency to exaggerate the apocalyptic and eschatological element in our Lord's message, and to subordinate to this the purely religious and ethical elements, will ever find its re-

¹ Schweitzer, *The Quest of the Historical Jesus*, p. 399.

The Christ of the Gospels

futation in "Q." This source is the authority for that which formed the central theme of the message of our Lord—that is the revelation of the knowledge of God, and the moral call to believe, and to renounce the world and to gain heaven—this and nothing more.¹

No parables, for instance, are more typical of our Lord's teaching than the well-known trilogy of the sower and the seed. It is impossible to miss the great religious principles set forth in them. They indicate an ethical and religious appeal, development, and fruition, and we are told that the kingdom of God is like that. To refuse a rational exegesis of such parables is to reduce Christ's teaching to the baldest statement and the most unfruitful commonplace. To allow it is to present us with a view of the kingdom quite other than that of the thorough-going eschatologist.

The presence of 'apocalyptic method' in the ages which immediately preceded and followed that of our Lord will, of course, be conceded. It will also be conceded that our Lord Himself might use a method so common to describe the blessedness of what He had to give the world, and the pain and strife which lay before both Him and them before 'the day of the Lord' could come. But it remains to be considered whether the familiar forms carried nothing more than the sensuous or political and social well-being presented in the Jewish apoca-

¹ Harnack, *The Sayings of Jesus*, pp. 250, 251.

The Higher Synthesis—Jesus Christ

lyses. The Messianic Kingdom outlined by Christ differs from that of Jewish tradition. To say that the two were identical, and that by the time the Twelve had returned from their mission to the cities of Israel Jesus expected that the Kingdom would have come, and that He was bitterly disappointed when He found that it was not so, is to interpret that kingdom in terms of the apocalypse in Daniel, and this is strangely at variance with the spiritual character of the kingdom as outlined in many a parable.¹

To quote from Dr. Sanday,

' We should accustom ourselves to the recognition of a large acceptance on the part of our Lord of the ideas that He found in existence all around Him. We should in each case start from the sense in which those ideas were understood by His contemporaries. And not until we have thoroughly searched and sounded this sense should we turn to look for another. But on the reverse side, we must also not stint our recognition of the extent to which, in the very act of adopting and using these ideas, our Lord really re-moulded and transformed them. And most of all, we must beware of withholding this recognition at the bidding of certain tacit humanitarian presuppositions, which, I suspect, are present in Schweitzer's book to a greater degree than he is himself aware.'²

If Jesus spoke of the kingdom as something to be realized in the future, He also spoke of it as present. If on occasions He describes its blessedness in terms

¹ See Adams Brown, *ut supra*, p. 345.

² *Life of Christ in Recent Research*, p. 108.

The Christ of the Gospels

of material advantage, He also declares that it is to be found within the inner consciousness of its children. Christianity is a religion of hope for the future; it is also, and equally, a religion of present experience. To interpret the teaching of Jesus we need both the eschatological and the moral point of view. To shut out one or the other of these results is a partial, and therefore imperfect, interpretation. But if one of these must go, why should it be the latter? The former gives us the setting. It is local and temporal in form. The latter gives us the content. It is ethical, universal, and eternal.

'What Jesus means by such descriptions of the glory of the kingdom of God is a condition of blessedness to be attained now by all who enter the kingdom. The blessings of the forgiveness of sins, of purity and righteousness, of the satisfying of the soul's hunger and thirst for God, are set forth in concrete imagery in which use is made of language which would appeal to the hearers of Jesus. Abstractions are avoided because they would have been less forcible; but there is an entire absence of the grotesque exaggerations which abound in Jewish theology and in early Christian literature. The religious conceptions of undisturbed communion with God and of eternal life dominate the thought-world of Jesus.'¹

The perils of a fanciful interpretation are well known, but these may be guarded against, and when

¹ See a striking Article by the Rev. J. G. Tasker, D.D., in the *Expository Times*, July, 1910. The whole article might be quoted in this connexion.

The Higher Synthesis—Jesus Christ

the subjective interpretation is thus corrected by the general tenor of Scripture there emerges from the parables of our Lord the vision of a kingdom far beyond that of the Apocalypse of Enoch, of Baruch, or even of Daniel. It is that of a kingdom which differs from these in that the course of time has revealed its ever-increasing establishment in the spiritual experience of the human race. These are for one particular age; they are local, material in outlook, and partial in description. This kingdom is for all time; it gathers into one sublime unity, one spiritual dominion, one moral expression, all phases of human life; ‘fresh streams from God’ flow through the forms and channels in which it seeks its eternal expression. The unfolding still continues. The fulfilment is yet to be.

‘The real coming of the kingdom—the fact corresponding to it in the field of ultimate realities—is what we are in the habit of calling the work of the Holy Spirit, from the day of Pentecost onwards; the presence of a divine force, drawing and annexing (so far as the resistance of human wills allows it) the world to itself, but as yet still in mid-process, and with possibilities in the future of which we perhaps hardly dream.’¹

But if we are justified in finding this spiritual note, this aspect of eternity, in the teaching of Jesus, then its reference to the interpretation of His Person becomes at least as important as the recognition of

¹ Sanday, *ut supra*, p. 122.

The Christ of the Gospels

'the apocalyptic method.' It gives us a better explanation of the effect of His teaching upon those who heard it; we become able to justify the saying attributed to Him by another disciple, and acknowledge that His words are 'Spirit and Life,' and so arrive at last at the inevitable conclusion, which was also the earliest—'Never man spake like this man.'

The theory put forth by Dr. Schweitzer is really an attack upon Christianity. If it be allowed, Christianity, as based on the Incarnation of the Son of God, is destroyed. The figure of its founder, as portrayed by Dr. Schweitzer, does not command the respect, to say nothing of the reverence, of the world. No religion can be built upon its eschatology, least of all a religion of love. The belief in a good time coming can never produce religious faith. Both faith and love have for their object a Person. No man can surrender himself to an imagined condition of vague and unguaranteed well-being. Christianity is a religion of devotion to a Person, the highest, divinest that can be conceived. It is the impact of that Personality upon human thought and feeling which has lifted the world, and fired it with the hope of a divine inheritance—the inheritance of God. No dream, however sublime, could have dissipated the miasma of moral corruption that rested so heavily over the Roman Empire in the early years of the Christian era.

Thorough-going eschatology means that we must give up that which St. Paul considered to be 'the hope of glory.' In its place we are to accept as the

The Higher Synthesis—Jesus Christ

heart of our enthusiasm ‘the apocalyptic vision.’ Fellowship with Christ is to be abandoned in favour of certain conceptions which belong to Jewish eschatology. These conceptions we may allegorize or spiritualize for our own use whenever necessary. Such a scheme of religion is vague and indefinite to a degree. The ideas with which we may content ourselves are, in their ultimate analysis, ‘visions.’ There is no guarantee for either the vision or the seer; and, to make the indefiniteness greater still, each of us may apparently allegorize or spiritualize them for ourselves. It will be a strange ‘city of God’ which will be erected upon such shifting sands.

There is no provision here for meeting the cry of the human heart for forgiveness. The sense of sin, so universal, so insistent, is completely ignored. Sacrifice and mediation as the only remedy of the broken heart are wrought into the common instincts of humanity. Such instincts are honoured and fulfilled in the Cross of Jesus Christ. But the gospel which we are now instructed to preach to those who cry to be delivered from ‘this body of death’ is the gospel of a new age, undefined and unguaranteed, which God will some day bring in. How this interpretation of ‘the righteousness of God’ is to be brought down from the heavenly sphere, and translated into terms of human life, we are not told. The Pauline answer that it is to be ‘from faith unto faith’ cannot, of course, be allowed. For one thing, we shall be told, it is Pauline, and therefore ‘unhistorical,’ and for another—and this we shall allow

The Christ of the Gospels

—faith, no less than love, implies the living, the transcendental Christ, as well as the human Jesus with His warm tears, His aching heart, His passion, and His cross.

Another object of Christian hope to be surrendered to the eschatological method is that of the Christian Church, united at last in the unity of the Spirit, in one common life, regulated and informed by one common ethic, with one common hope. But the unity of the Christian Church must presumably be relegated to the limbo of unattainable ideals. For it is ‘in Christ’ that the many are made one, and if all that remains of that Lord is the disappointed and despairing dreamer of impossible visions it is hard to see how the Church can find the fullness of her life in Him, while if the visions are capable of individual interpretation, a unity of design is impossible in kaleidoscopic figures which change with every lightest touch.

We have dealt at some length with the eschatological interpretation of the Person of Christ because it is at once the latest and the most typical of the historical school of interpretation. This school confines its attention to the facts of the earthly life of Christ, and dismisses everything which those facts may suggest as to the relation of God to man as being transcendental in character and theological in method. But there are other methods of interpretation; and some reference, however incomplete and superficial, must be made to them. It was felt that any attempt to explain the Person of Christ

The Higher Synthesis—Jesus Christ

by dealing with the facts of His earthly life and history apart from His own personal consciousness was bound to be incomplete and defective. The gospel history shows our Lord to have been at once conscious of divinity and conscious of human limitation. It was thought that the great Pauline statement (Phil. ii. 5-8) supplied a necessary clue to the explanation of this paradox in consciousness, and the Greek word which is the key to the passage was adopted as representing a divine act which explains the mystery of the incarnation. We speak now of a 'Kenosis' or self-emptying as having taken place within the depths of the Divine Being, the result of which was the appearing upon earth of the Eternal Son in the form of man. It is obvious that such a theory is beset with difficulties. A careless statement may give us an impaired Godhead. It may teach us that the Eternal was subject to change in becoming man. Or it may suggest that the divinity so incarnated was only a part of the Divine; that certain qualities of the Godhead, omniscience, omnipresence, and the like, were obscured in Jesus. Or again, we may easily be asked to believe that there were two different personalities involved in the man Jesus. Such are some of the difficulties which have beset the Christian Church from the earliest times in attempting to solve the method of the incarnation. But it is to be observed that after all it is only the method that is thus in uncertainty. As Dr. Forsyth says, 'It is a matter of theological science, not of religious faith. And the science of it can

The Christ of the Gospels

wait, but the religion of it cannot.'¹ And yet in spite of this the human mind seems to find it impossible to keep away from the insoluble problem, and Dr. Forsyth himself proceeds to suggest certain analogies in human experiences which may, he thinks, make the doctrine of the divine Kenosis intelligible. It must be confessed that the analogies he brings forward do not help us very much. No analogy drawn from human experience will suffice to show us how the divine nature could empty itself and yet remain unimpaired. No explanation yet offered as to how perfect God and perfect man could attain to a unity of consciousness in one Person can be considered sufficient. In some most enlightening articles contributed by Dr. Dykes to the *Expository Times*, and since published in book form, he says:

‘The difficulty is a psychological one, the answer to which lies hidden in the mysterious subject of Personality; when we come to know whether the personal life can be lived from more than a single centre, whether consciousness must be single, we shall find ourselves nearer the solution. . . . Our best hope of understanding the dual life of our Lord may lie in the humble study of our own personal life. Within the mysterious depths of a single personality there may co-exist parallel states of spiritual life, one only of which emerges in ordinary human consciousness.’²

Apparently we are to hear more of this line of ap-

¹ *The Person and Place of Jesus Christ.*

² ‘Theanthropic Life,’ by Dr. Oswald Dykes, *Expository Times*, 1905, p. 155.

The Higher Synthesis—Jesus Christ

proach. For in a work which has been much used in writing this chapter¹ Dr. Sanday deals with the theory of a subliminal self and applies it to the Person of our Lord. He does not speak of parallel states of consciousness, as Dr. Dykes does, but prefers to speak of one, the human, as being superimposed upon the spiritual. Dr. Sanday speaks of the upper medium as the field of all personal expression in action, and of the lower depths, to which belongs all that is divine; and the consciousness of our Lord is ‘the narrow neck through which alone the divine could come to expression.’ Within this subliminal self the seat of Christ’s divinity is to be found. Dr. Sanday’s suggestion will doubtless receive the full attention which it deserves when he has fully developed it; but we may well ask whether this subliminal self with its experiences, and the conscious self with its own separate experiences, do not make two personalities, and whether, if this be applied to Christ, we do not get the fatal dualism in His Person again.

To us it seems that all such attempts to explain the manner of the working of the Divine Will are doomed to failure. But this need not for a moment impair the validity of the fact itself. That will for ever remain based upon the two-fold foundation of personal experience and the gospel testimony. By personal experience we do

¹ *Christologies, Ancient and Modern*, chapter vi., cf. *Hibbert Journal*, October, 1910, p. 201.

The Christ of the Gospels

not mean some momentary exultation of spirit, some ecstasy of emotion, but rather a complete transformation in the moral, intellectual, and spiritual nature both of the individual and the community. No amount of scientific criticism as to how the incarnation came about can controvert the fact for each one that by contact with the Jesus of the Gospel story his sins have been forgiven, and that he is conscious of peace where before he knew only an increasing disquiet; that since he made to the Personality described in those Gospels the surrender of faith, his whole view of God and the world has been changed, transformed, indefinitely uplifted in range and intensity; that he sees farther and deeper into the mystery of his own nature and of the general life of man, and that the divine purpose continually unfolds itself to his wondering eyes until he is lost in praise and adoration. He sees that what he discovers in himself is also to be discovered in the communal life of the world; that wherever the knowledge of the gospel comes, there is at once the bringing in of a better hope; that degrading tyrannies, which had beset the human mind, are broken, and the fetters of evil habit fall off; that a larger, freer life at once begins; and that, once set in operation, this power grows from more to more, until there seems no limit to its development.

The only cause which seems sufficient to account for this indisputable effect is that in coming into contact with Jesus man has touched the eternal spring of all that is of truth, of goodness, and of

The Higher Synthesis—Jesus Christ

power. This Jesus, then, is God to him.¹ Turning to the record again, he finds everywhere an underlying feeling and conviction, which becomes clearer and clearer until at last it breaks into open and uncompromising declaration, that Jesus Christ was and is ‘the very God.’ That the mind should then begin to question how it all came about is only natural; but that any answer worthy of universal acceptance can be given is extremely doubtful. The Church has fastened upon a single word used by St. Paul, but, as Dr. Sanday says,² ‘The most expressive passages are largely incidental and metaphorical. It is a mistake to harden them into dogma. . . . So far as I can see, the formal theory of Kenosis rests upon an altogether insufficient basis, both biblical and historical.’ This criticism is true, but though the scriptural basis for the doctrine may not be so clear as one might desire, the teaching may yet be true. For if, in some way which we cannot fathom, this miracle of miracles did take place, and there was a union in the experience of a single Person of all that pertains to the divine and of all that pertains to the human, it can only have come about by some realization of the deter-

¹ So Dr. Adams Brown (*Christian Theology in Outline*, p. 347): ‘In Jesus we hear the voice of God speaking to our conscience as nowhere else in history, and through submission to Him we are conscious of a moral and spiritual transformation which requires God for its explanation. This is why we give Him a divine significance we do not attach to other men.’

² *Christologies, Ancient and Modern*, p. 73.

The Christ of the Gospels

mination of the Divine Will which would be in keeping with the condescension of love which St. Paul has taught us to call ‘the grace of God.’ It is only by concentrating thought upon the absolute freedom of infinite power realizing itself in love that we get any light at all. Impossible as it may appear to us, we cannot deny the possibility of it to God. It may be unthinkable, and yet be true. To come to any other conclusion is to limit the Infinite One.

‘It was the greatest act of moral freedom ever done. The Godhead that freely made man was never so free as in becoming man. His self-limitation was so far from impairing His being that it became the mightiest act of it that we know. It was not limitation so much as concentration; . . . it was the most condensed expression of holy love. It was holy love acting at a point once for all. And holy love is the supreme category of the Almighty. It is the object for which all God’s omnipotence exists. To achieve that object is His true omnipotence. How then could Omnipotence be impaired by its own supreme act?’¹

This chapter may fitly close with equally beautiful words from a great American teacher who, more than most, seems to have penetrated into the innermost shrine, and to have learned there the great secret which our ears so often strain in vain to hear. Dr. Du Bose says: ‘When man, through the perfect love and grace and fellowship of God in Christ, has at last become himself in all the fullness of his

¹ Dr. Forsyth, *The Person and Place of Jesus Christ*, p. 315.

The Higher Synthesis—Jesus Christ

divine predestination, has not also God in the consummated act of His own love and grace and self-fulfilment in man realized that in which in the highest His selfhood consists, and by that fact become His own highest self in the world and in us? We speak of the incredible and impossible self-lowering or self-emptying of God in becoming man, or in undergoing the death of the cross. Is the act in which love becomes perfect a contradiction or a compromise of the divine nature? Is God not God, or least God, in the moment in which He is most love? Where before Christ or otherwhere than in Christ, in whom He humbled Himself to become man, and then humbled Himself with and in man to suffer what man must needs suffer in order to become what God would fain make him—and the highest and best that even God can make him—I say where before Christ, or where now otherwise than in Christ, and in the cross of the divine suffering together with and for man, where in all the story of the universe was or is love so love, or God so God! '¹

No pretence is made in this chapter to deal with so immeasurable a theme as is before us in the human-divine Person of our Lord. We have considered three typical lines of approach, which with modifications are continually being repeated. We have seen that the historical method is marked by very serious limitations—that in confining its attention exclusively to the mere record of what Jesus did and said,

¹ *The Gospel in the Gospels*, p. 272. See also Findlay, *Fellowship in the Life Eternal*, p. 332,

The Christ of the Gospels

it leaves out of sight the personal consciousness of our Lord, and to that extent is incomplete, inasmuch as it does not attempt to deal with that spring of both works and words which lies in the depths of personal life. It therefore fails both to account for the recognized moral and spiritual effects of the life of Christ, and it leaves the common religious instincts of humanity without explanation and without any promise of fulfilment. It has, however, the advantage which we would gladly recognize, and emphasize as strongly as possible, that it presents us with a complete humanity in the Person of Christ. The neglect of this side of our Lord's life in bygone days has been fraught with incalculable loss to the Church. We have also seen that the philosophical line of approach is open to serious error. It starts from the conception of a transcendent Christ, and then proceeds to account for it by a process of human reasoning, calling into use such passages of Scripture as seem to offer support. Inasmuch, however, as the subject before it is one which goes far beyond the range of human thought, its method can scarcely be considered conclusive. It is exposed to the criticism to which all forms of human reasoning are exposed, and the scriptures which it cites in support are often discounted on the ground that their authority is not yet completely established, or that the exegesis of the passages is subjective and uncertain.

There remains, then, the third method of approaching our subject. We are confronted with certain facts of experience, realized in both the individual

The Higher Synthesis—Jesus Christ

and the communal life of the Christian society. That experience is one to which the term ‘life’ has ever been attached. No other term comes sufficiently near defining its effects. And just as the scientist goes beyond the domain of the physical in accounting for that phase of life with which he deals in the physical realm, so we accept as the only sufficient cause of that which is before us in the moral and spiritual consciousness of man, the doctrine of the incarnation, that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God.¹ But we do not leave the matter here. We appeal back to both history and philosophy. The latter enables us to put aside conceptions which may easily gather around the great conclusion of our personal experience, and which, if they remained in our thought, would speedily reduce our religious life to an unhealthy pietism, incapable of quickening the ever-increasing life of man. The former in its turn enables us to find an objective for our thought in facts of history sufficiently attested by those who were in a position to verify them, and there is given to the mind, thus strengthened both by philosophy and by history, a sure ground on which it may stand. Our thought rests on the certainty of those things which we have believed. This method is that which first obtained in the Christian Church. It was along these lines that the Church advanced in thought to the position which she now holds. First came the quickening contact with the

¹ See Findlay, *Fellowship in the Life Eternal*, p. 224.

The Christ of the Gospels

risen and ascended Christ through the gift and the continued ministry of the Holy Spirit, then followed the interpretation of the experience so gained, and finally the verification of both in the gospel history. So at last came the great confession to be formulated in creed as it had been first known in the depths of personal life: ‘We believe and confess that our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is both Man and God.’

THE GOSPEL MESSAGE

TAKING as our guide the unique historical incarnation in the past, we may say that the incomplete revelation to man of God's purposes concerning man, and the complete subordination of the human will to the divine will, so that it may act unswervingly in carrying out those purposes, are what constitute union between the human and the divine natures, and that the realization of this union in mankind as it was once realized in Christ is the far-off divine event towards which the whole creation moves.

DR. W. R. INGE, *Contentio Veritatis*, p. 64.

Heaven is not a thing without us, nor is happiness anything distinct from a true conjunction of the mind with God in a secret feeling of His goodness, and reciprocation of affection to Him, wherein the divine glory most unfolds itself. And there is nothing that a soul touched with any serious sense of God can more earnestly thirst after or seek with more strength of affection than this. Then shall we be happy when God comes to be all in all to us.

JOHN SMITH, *The Nobleness of True Religion*.

CHAPTER VII

THE GOSPEL MESSAGE

WE have seen that in the Synoptic Gospels we have memoirs of the essential features belonging to a great Personality, and that these are conveyed to us along the double line of narrative and teaching. We have also seen that while these Gospels as we have them have been compiled from a variety of sources, these last are authentic and guarantee the story. Fragments may possibly be incorporated in the record the origin of which it is impossible to trace, but even these fragments must have been approved by those who compiled the record. We may also allow that in the fourth Gospel we have in the main interpretation rather than consecutive narrative. The whole scheme of the Gospel shows that the writer sets out to interpret the very Personality which is the burden of earlier Gospels, and to set forth its significance in the realm of faith.

But whether we consider the history or the interpretation, the attractiveness of the Personality thus portrayed is confessed. Jesus Christ compels a homage all but universal. This homage is far more

The Christ of the Gospels

than the reverence usually accorded to a great teacher. To account for it we need something greater, something more essential, than moral maxims, however impressive or original. Still less is it a mere aesthetic appreciation of what appeals to a sense of beauty or to springs of pity in the beholder. We are compelled to recognize that the appeal of the Person of our Lord is to something more deeply seated in the common nature of mankind than either aesthetic or intellectual appreciation. It is not accounted for by anything short of the doctrine of incarnation.

The conception of God manifest in flesh has profoundly affected those deep-seated springs in human nature which have given birth in one form or another to the common elements of all religion. Whether we study these on the animistic or on the pantheistic plane, we can see clearly enough that man has ever been 'feeling after' that which alone can satisfy, a true fellowship and union with that infinite world of spiritual, personal life—which in its supreme manifestation we know to be God. Men have sought to make themselves at one with the ghosts of their dead ancestors. Their uninstructed imagination has led them to embodiments in idea and in ritual which are both grotesque and gross. Their fear of the unseen has caused them to credit that for which they grope with qualities of fierceness and vindictiveness, reflected again by a common and inexorable law in the lives and practices of the worshipper. But these are only so many pathetic

The Gospel Message

indications of the need of revelation before an instinct entirely true and noble can be satisfied. On the pantheistic plane the same effect is seen. In his desperate attempt to find himself at one with the infinite Spirit, man is driven to deny the reality of that which prevents him from realizing the communion which he in his turn desires. He arrives at union by denying separation, and when he has persuaded himself, and by severest austerities schooled himself into that mental temper which allows it, that the world of sense as well as the sentient Being which is himself have no true existence, he thinks himself one with the infinite and elemental Being whom he names Brahma. But the mental process and the physical discipline by which he arrives at his goal indicate nothing so clearly as a certain insatiable craving for a life which shall be at once human and divine. The possibility of realizing that splendid dream Christ came to reveal. In Him it is seen that human life may be lifted up, not into mere treaty but into fellowship. The intercourse between man and God is raised from the occasional conversation of the Old Testament to the continued communion of the New. In the God-man it is seen that the blessedness of union lies not in the absorption or obliteration of that which alone is capable of realizing union, but in a moral and spiritual fellowship, in which those who enter into that union shall have full honour done to each individual essence. Such a fellowship is discovered to us in the incarnation.

The Christ of the Gospels

'We find the desire for union with God to lie at the very basis of our being, and when once the story of the incarnation has dawned upon our horizon, we recognize that under the conditions of the world of sin in which we live, nothing else could have so adequately satisfied this inmost aspiration. It must be true, we say, because it so incomparably meets our need.'¹

In all theories of union with God there are two great perils to be avoided; upon one or other of them great and historic expositions have been wrecked. The first is that which is illustrated in Greek, that is, in Platonic teaching. It lies in the emptying of the great first cause of all that gives it objective reality. Plato was confronted with the problem which awaits every age. He sought to account for the transcendence and the immanence of Deity in the world of phenomena. He has given his solution to the world in his doctrine of Ideas. These changeless and eternal 'ideas' gave him what he, with all great thinkers, sought—something permanent in a world of change, an abiding city, a pattern in the mount, something eternal in the heavens. He was dimly conscious of 'a type of perfect in his mind,' and sought to account for it by positing a realm of absolute existences to which all embodiments of art, all findings of science, all concepts of mind, more or less perfectly corresponded. If he had rested here he would have left us merely with a refined Polytheism, for the eternal and invisible forms so described are nothing

¹ Illingworth, *Personality, Human and Divine*, p. 196.

The Gospel Message

but abstract presentations of gods many. The old trouble of multiplicity in the spiritual realm was still present to him. Something was needed to connect and co-ordinate the several 'ideas' among themselves; something which should gather up into a great spiritual unity these sundered forms. It is well known that Plato found his ultimate unity in the idea of Good. It is a great conception. But when pressed to still further define it, Plato was unable or unwilling to do so. By means of analogies he seeks to describe it. It is the sun in the world of ideas; it is the ultimate cause of both knowledge and existence; but further than this he does not carry us. The idea of Good remains impersonal and abstract. It is clear that this cannot be held to be the final word in religion. Within the nature of man himself there are laws which determine the quality of that which alone can satisfy. Our conscious spiritual life is a prophecy of that revelation of God in which alone we can rest. Whether Plato himself regarded the Good as something more than a mere inanimate abstraction is much disputed by scholars. But that something more is needed we shall agree. Professor Stewart lays down a true axiom for our guidance when he says :

'The idea of the separate individuality or personality of the Self is not more essential to the moral consciousness than the idea of the separate individuality or personality of God is to the religious consciousness; and in the religious consciousness, at any rate, both of these ideas are

The Christ of the Gospels

involved—an individual Self stands in a personal relation to another individual—God.¹

In another passage of the same work Professor Stewart says:

'Plato's answer consists in showing that the "Whole," or all-embracing Good, cannot be grasped scientifically, but must be seen imperfectly in a similitude. The logical understanding, not satisfied with knowing what the all-embracing Good is like, wishes to know what it is—as if it were an object presented to knowledge. But the Good is not an object presented to knowledge. It is the condition of knowledge. It is like light, which is not one of the things seen, but the condition of seeing. To suppose that the Whole, or Good, is an object, among objects, of knowledge is the fault which Plato finds with the logical understanding; and a Platonist might be allowed to develop the master's criticism as follows: The conception of "Whole" or "Universe" which the logical understanding professes to have, and manipulates in its proof of the non-existence of a Personal God, is not a conception at all. The understanding cannot conceive the universe as finished Whole. Its "whole" is always also a part of something indefinitely greater. The argument that the ruler of the universe is not a personal God, because the part cannot rule the Whole, juggling, as it does, with this sham conception—that of "Whole which is not also Part"—is inconclusive.'²

It is just at this point that the teaching of Christ

¹ *The Myths of Plato*, p. 51.

² Prof. Stewart, *ut supra*, p. 59.

The Gospel Message

comes in to fulfil the splendid and all but complete teaching of the Greek. In the Matthaean Logia our Lord is said to have declared that while to unaided man God cannot be known, yet there is a knowledge open to him by revelation, and in the Johannine contribution that knowledge is described in terms which enables us to see that it is not a knowledge which satisfies the logical understanding, but one which stands for that perfect fellowship which is the highest and truest explanation of life. It is not the knowledge of the schools, but rather an intimate knowledge, born of spiritual sympathy, and indicating, more than anything else, a true communion of individual souls, in which man at last is one with God. The loss of personality which is felt in all Platonic descriptions of 'that which is,' 'the absolute,' and 'the good,' is not felt here. Man may not be able to reduce God until he brings Him within the terms of a logical formula, but he knows Him nevertheless as the Father knows the Son, and as the Son knows the Father.

The second danger to be avoided in describing this great goal of union with God, which the religious consciousness of mankind has so persistently kept before itself, is that of ignoring or denying the reality of human personality and freedom. As the former peril may be illustrated from Greek thought, so this latter may be found in Oriental systems. It is to be noticed that the question before the Hindu is precisely that which confronted the Greek. It was how to establish a true relation between Being

The Christ of the Gospels

and Becoming, between the real and the phenomenal. The difficulty with which the Hindu grappled was that of reconciling the process of the universe in time with the unchangeableness of Deity. He also would make himself one with the power of indissoluble life. He also sought a 'kingdom that cannot be shaken.' The instinct of his heart told him that it was to be found, if anywhere, in God. Yet how could he, caught in this world of change, part of the universal flux of things, realize the absolute? How could he escape this unceasing change, this world of sense? He answered his question by roundly denying the existence of the phenomenal universe. He attempted to persuade himself that he was caught in the meshes of a net of illusion flung far and wide over the whole domain of life. Could he but see that the world of phenomena had no real existence, he would be delivered that moment from the haunting sense, not only of change, but of separation from the one and eternal sum of truth and existence. He proceeded to blot out of his mind the idea of 'another'—himself, and schooled himself to believe that God was 'One without a second,' and that he himself was that One. He arrived at union by denying separation. Into the many contradictions of thought and life that follow, into the moral confusion, the chaotic ethics, that have blighted the whole life and thought of India, we cannot enter here.¹ Our one purpose is

¹ See the Fernley Lecture of 1902, by the Rev. Henry Haigh, pp. 110–112.

The Gospel Message

to show that while Christianity acknowledges that the world passes away, and that here we have no continuing city, it declares that to be a true instinct which looks for rest in union with God, and shows that this may be attained without denying the reality of human personality, and so making impossible, by a futile and unnecessary capitulation, the very union itself. In the Person of our Lord it reveals a humanity at one with God. It presents it to us in a setting of wondrous power and peace, declares in that Personality a true victory over the world, and so far from destroying, as India threatens to do, the moral sense in man, it lifts man up into a nobler ethic, even 'the righteousness of God.'

It is in keeping with the immeasurable importance of the subject that all down the ages the doctrine of the Person of Christ has held the attention of the Christian Church. Many a noble presentation of that subject remains to guide our thought and to stimulate our faith. The method of presentation, however, is all-important, and we can see three distinct lines of approach. They may be described as the dogmatic, the historical, and the experimental. Now the sphere of dogma is necessarily intellectual. As such it is exposed to the changes that belong to all mental development. If some fixed scheme of doctrine is imposed upon the Church, it may become in time a hard crust, which cramps and fetters the expanding life of the Church, until at last the living spirit proves too much for the rigid shell; the latter is rent asunder; and men, missing the stability and

The Christ of the Gospels

support which the unyielding form had supplied, are tempted to cry—

A thousand forms are gone; I care for nothing; all shall go. The sphere of dogma again is often local; the teaching of the Greek Church differs from that of the Roman. Or it may be individual. Each teacher must—if he is to be true to himself—give expression to that which appeals to him. The theological method, based upon philosophical propositions, is at once too narrow, too rigid, and too uncertain. It allows insufficient play for the human heart. In attempting to secure authority, it does so at the expense of flexibility and self-adaptation, and it works with elements which cannot be final since they are capable of various interpretation. There is even less prospect of final relief if we follow what may be called the literary-historical method. There is a truly historical view of our Lord; but to make our interpretation of the Person of our Lord rest wholly upon the literature of the Christian Church is not likely to give us the finality which we require. If the basis of faith is completely documentary, as soon as the documents are challenged (as they are challenged to-day) the Christian who may not be in a position to criticize the criticism feels his basis to be uncertain. For example: the great clue to what is known as the Kenotic interpretation of the Person of our Lord is found mostly in the well-known passage in the second chapter of the Epistle to the Philippians. But when it is stated by scholars that it is questioned whether that epistle was written by St.

The Gospel Message

Paul, it is inevitable that the uninstructed Christian should feel that this view of our Lord's Person has lost authority. We have seen that the Synoptic Gospels do convey a sufficient indication (considering the purpose for which they were written) of the transcendental character of that Person. But the believer who has never studied the question from a critical point of view generally goes to the fourth Gospel for support of the essential divinity of our Lord, and when he finds that that Gospel is by some relegated to the close of the second century, and that it is held to be a Gnostic or Sacramentarian presentation of Christ, it is probable that he begins forthwith to question the certainty of those things which he has believed. Should he abandon the transcendental view of Christ and accept the literary-historical method, he will speedily find himself left with a purely aesthetic appreciation of Christ. His system of ethics will be devoid of authority, and his theory of life will be destitute of power. We thus need to be recalled at once from the vehicle in which the gospel has been brought to us, and from those mental deductions from it which have been elaborated in the schools. The content of the gospel—its spirit, not its letter—should be our first care, and that divine content is to be found in the Person of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. This sublime object of our contemplation is to be approached neither exclusively from the side of history nor dogmatically from that of philosophy, but rather from the side of our personal appreciation of a Divine Person.

The Christ of the Gospels

50
‘We start indeed from the Records, but we do not grasp the facts they bring us until the enrichment of our inner life makes us aware that we have touched the Living One. . . Help lies for each one of us, not in what we make of the story, but in what the contents of the story make of us. And the one thing which the Gospels will give us as an overpowering reality which allows no doubt is just the most tender part of all: it is the inner life of Jesus itself. Only he who yearns after an honest fullness for his own inner life can perceive the strength and fullness of that soul of Jesus, and whenever we come to see the Person of Jesus, then, under the impress of that inner life breaking through all the veils of the story, we ask no more questions as to the trustworthiness of the evangelists.’¹

Whether we study the communal life of the Christian era, or the less easily described yet not less definite experience of the individual, we are bound to acknowledge certain effects which have altogether transformed the life of men within that era.² These effects may be broadly characterized. They are powerful, of universal experience, and beneficent. They are both uplifting and progressive, and the force which produced them has not yet spent itself. Above all they are moral and spiritual. They have raised the ethical standard, and they have given to those who have allowed themselves to be governed

¹ Dr. Herrmann, *Communion with God*, Book II. The whole of this division may be read in this connexion.

² Illingworth, *Personality, Human and Divine*, pp. 196, 197.

The Gospel Message

by them a very real sense of God. Explain the fact as we may, Jesus Christ stands to-day for the greatest philanthropic, moral, and spiritual force which the world has ever known. It is the full and clear recognition of this which gives us the true line of approach in considering the mystery of His divinely-human Person. The Christian world owes much to Ritschl in this connexion.¹ He does not build upon the philanthropical conclusions of the Church, nor is he greatly concerned with critical questions arising from the Gospels. He deals with the content of the gospel rather than with the vehicle. He applies the predicate of divinity to Christ as a value-judge-
ment.

'To reach the worth of Christ he starts from the work of Christ. This is the inductive method of modern science. He starts from facts, what Christ is and does in the community that bears His name, and thus he reaches the truth, which alone explains the facts, of what Christ is in His own Person.'²

Dr. Garvie goes on to say that Ritschl shows how it was the knowledge of the historical Jesus together with faith in the exalted Christ which formed Apostolic doctrine. 'For doctrine in the New Testament is the expression of experience.' 'This Jesus,' says St. Peter, 'this Jesus; that which we have seen and heard, and our hands have handled, hath God

¹ Orr, *The Ritschlian Theology*, pp. 243 ff; and Adams Brown, *Christian Theology in Outline*, p. 340.

² Garvie, *The Ritschlian Theology*, p. 267.

The Christ of the Gospels

made'—in that He hath raised Him from the dead—'both Lord and Christ.' The whole speech, while it reaches in its climax the transcendent character of our Lord's Person, is charged with the testimony of personal experience.

There is a growing impatience manifesting itself throughout the Christian Church with both the critical and theological method. In so far as this impatience does not remain content with a merely negative attitude, it should receive the sympathy of all wise leaders of the Christian Church. For it is a sign that the Church is reverting to the truer method. The Church calls for a more assured basis. No teaching however authoritative, no analysis however complete, can take the place of personal experience. To quote again from Dr Herrmann, 'The communion on which everything depends is ours only when we can say to our souls that we mark God's working upon us in undeniable facts, and that we feel His presence.'¹ It is impossible to insist too strongly upon a Christian experience as the basis of that knowledge of Christ's Person which admits us into the joy and peace of a full communion with God. The secret of power lies in the fellowship of the believer with God, and only a true and full vision of Him in whom God and Man were one can bring that fellowship within our reach. The vision is given when Christ has become to us a part of our actual experience, when we are in a position to meet the

¹ So also Adams Brown, pp. 331, 347; and Streatfeild, *ut supra*, p. 116.

The Gospel Message

subtleties of ecclesiastical schools or the hostility of those to whom religion has ceased to have any spiritual meaning, with the sufficient reply—‘One thing I know, whereas I was blind, now I see.’

What we have felt and seen
With confidence we tell,
And publish to the sons of men
The signs infallible.

In making a personal contact with Christ the centre and key to Christian religious life there are dangers only too manifest. There is the danger of resolving Christianity into a mere congeries, vague and formless, of subjective experiences. We may lose what the dogmatic method has at any rate secured, the note of authority. We may slip back into the former uncertainty from which historical criticism has done so much to deliver us. Christianity may become, what it already is to some, an unhealthy pietism. It may destroy that which seems to some to have at last risen above the horizon, ‘with healing in its wings’—the unity of the Christian Church. It may become a dispersing rather than a uniting force. The safeguard against these dangers is to be found in using both dogma and criticism to confirm the immediate and personal experience. The testimony of the Church, noble fruit of strenuous contention for ‘the faith once delivered to the saints,’ then becomes not only confirming evidence but also a bond of union, relating the individual experience to that of the universal Church of Christ; while a sane and balanced criticism affords an even greater bulwark to

The Christ of the Gospels

our faith, and delivers us from the extravagance of an individual interpretation, so that we become 'enriched in Christ Jesus in all utterance and knowledge, even as the testimony of Christ was confirmed in us.' The question still, however, remains, How is the individual experience of this fellowship and union of which our Lord is both the type, the author, and the finisher to be attained? How may man come into living personal contact with Jesus Christ? It is here that, as we have seen, the fourth Gospel comes to our help with its wealth of suggestion, and its impressive illustrations, drawn, not from the presentations of a later imagination, but from the actual experience of those who walked and talked with Jesus. The evangelist shows us that it is by an act of self-committal, by the surrender of the individual will, realizing the freedom of the personality that makes such a surrender, and the reality of the Person to whom it is made—it is by the submission of spirit to spirit that man enters into this highest fellowship. Such an act of faith demands all that we have found in the Gospels. The objective element in its presentation of the divine is needed to give reality to such an act of self-committal. The historic 'Jesus'—historic both in the experience of the first disciples, and in our own later grasp of the human relations in which His life found expression, must stand out before us, a dominating Personality whose 'Follow Me' is both definite and compelling. But inasmuch as that great imperative demands the surrender of our whole nature, inasmuch as it is given forth to all

Jesus the Christ - both an historic and a Transcendent Personality

The Gospel Message

81

generations of men and holds good for all nations, inasmuch as obedience thereto confers the unspeakable blessing of forgiveness, and admits mankind to that union with the divine which it has long sought, and finds at last in a communion of spirit with Spirit, we need also for the assurance of these things the transcendent Christ. If our faith is to have a sufficient objective we want exactly what is offered us in the Gospels—a true humanity and a complete divinity united in one Person. The Church can never acquiesce in any separation of ‘Jesus’ from ‘Christ.’ If she surrenders the one her faith will lack reality; if she surrenders the other she loses that assurance of fellowship with God in which are bound up the springs of peace and joy and life eternal. The only creed that can justify this absolute trust in the Man Jesus is the time-honoured belief that this same Man is God manifest in the flesh; and the only faith that can admit us to a true communion with God is just that self-submission which springs from perfect trust, and which is seen most perfectly in Him who emptied Himself and became obedient unto death.

In the human Jesus, then, we have met with a fact which is far deeper and richer than that which we find in one who is merely human. Through Him we have access to God, and this access deepens into communion. The doctrine of union with God in Christ has never yet become a matter of universal acceptance. Here and there in the course of the ages men and women of exalted spirit have caught upon their

The Christ of the Gospels

uplifted brows the light of the glory of God. But when they have returned to the common life of their fellows, men have turned away from them. Unable themselves to bear the light, they have cast a veil over the intolerable glory of the man who has been in fellowship with God. Then they have proceeded to discredit the experience they themselves could not partake. They have called it 'mysticism,' and distrusted it accordingly. Others, of nobler spirit than these, have felt, and rightly felt, that the only true basis of Christian consciousness is to be found in the historical revelation in Jesus Christ. But they have sought that revelation in the deeds and words of Jesus rather than in Himself. They have feared that insistence upon union with God in Christ might lead to that Pantheistic conception of Christ which always threatens to invade the thought of the Christian Church. This is too great a concession to make to fear, and to neglect this teaching is to deny to the spiritual consciousness of the Church her truest fountain-head of spiritual strength and refreshment.

That teaching is the spring of the highest and truest morality. In union with Christ we are delivered indeed from the 'law of ordinances,' but we are not thereby left to the perils of making our freedom into licence. The antinomian danger ceases to threaten when it is seen that, made one with Christ, we enter into a fuller and more vital obligation: that

The mercy which hath loosed my bonds
Hath bound me fast to Him.

The Gospel Message

Union with God in Christ accounts for a familiar paradox in Christian morality. Contact with Christ has a marked effect upon the individual conscience. We are judged afresh every time we touch Christ. In every moment of revelation the man who has been with Jesus cries, ‘Depart from me, I am a sinful man.’ And yet in the self-same moment there is the bringing in of a better hope. The moment of our personal humiliation is the moment of our exaltation. We are threatened with a moral despair, we are at the same time uplifted in spiritual aspiration. When the confession ‘I am not worthy to be called Thy son’ breaks at last from our lips, we hear the ‘comfortable voice’ assuring us that we are nevertheless God’s son, and that there await us the ring, the robe, and the feast of joy. This paradox is understood when we know that we have touched God in Jesus Christ, and that it is the divine in Him which has revealed our ‘worst despair’ and our ‘best of hope.’ Thenceforth we are delivered from the law of ordinances. The irksome negations of moral codes disappear; the underlying principle of all law is discovered in a great positive force lying within the Christian consciousness itself. This is the very life of God within the man. It is effective; where the human submission is complete, it is perfectly effective; ‘he cannot sin, for the divine seed is in him.’ ‘Sin is as foreign to the character of the redeemed man himself as it is alien to the Christ in whom he dwells.’¹

¹ Dr. G. G. Findlay, *Fellowship in the Life Eternal*, p. 265.

The Christ of the Gospels

The law of duty becomes a new thing to us when we see it honoured in the human life of Jesus. Our own righteousness becomes as ‘filthy rags.’ Yet because we know ourselves to be one with Him, and because of what He is, we are not only ‘begotten again unto a living hope,’ but there is created within us a moral power to realize that hope which law in itself could never give. For Christ lives in us; and life is more than law. Even when our moral striving seems fruitless, we know ourselves caught up into a great world movement belonging to all time, whose consummation is assured, and which is the very fullness of the divine righteousness flooding the channels of human life. Our experience of communion with God in Jesus Christ is not only the consciousness of deliverance, but the assurance of fulfilment. Forgiveness deepens into holiness. Being justified by faith we seek peace with God. The secret of human deliverance and of moral conduct is to be found neither in the force of a moral example nor in the ritual of the Church, but in a divine power introduced into the very heart of human nature, that is by the union of God with man in Christ. All the resources of Deity are available for man, working in the depths of his spiritual nature to redeem, to quicken, and to glorify. This is the gospel which is summed up in the great name Jesus Christ. Man’s spiritual experience attests the fact, and the gospel history tells him how it came about.

Union with God in and through the God-Man Jesus Christ has a most important application in the

The Gospel Message

whole field of social service. It is at once the basis, the rule, and the fulfilment of the great law of philanthropy. It is full of significance and promise that in these days in which the Christian Church is feeling after a restatement of the doctrine of the Person of Christ there should also arise a larger conception of the claims of humanity. That the two should present themselves together before the attention of the Church need occasion no surprise. Their union is but the attestation of the claim which we now make. There is no sufficient motive, neither is there any promise of fulfilment, in Christian service, unless these are discovered in the union of the believer with Christ, and for this we need the presentation of a Jesus historic in human life, and of a divine Christ, transcendental indeed, yet historic in individual experience. Man has always known something of the beauty of the service of love, but in the meagreness and narrowness of his heart he has always limited that service. The family, the clan, the nation—each has played its part in building up a barrier outside of which love had no obligation. Even within such restricted territories love has been limited in expression. The individual has always kept before himself a limit. Sooner or later he reached a point when he could assure himself that he had ‘done all that could fairly be expected of a man,’ and having reached it he held that no further obligation rested upon him. Into this meagre interpretation of a great law Christ brought two elements which so transformed it that in after days the old commandment

The Christ of the Gospels

was seen to be ‘a new commandment.’ He pushed back the boundaries imposed by selfishness, and made the kingdom of love a kingdom without frontiers. He made the obligation universal. Then He made it equally intensive by making His own sacrifice of Himself the law of service. To the length and breadth of a universal love He added the height and depth of personal sacrifice. But how was He to make men capable of a love so divine? He accomplished it by binding them to Himself.¹ When to the setting forth of the new philanthropy Christ added the words ‘Ye have done it unto Me,’ He endowed His words with spirit and life. Thenceforth a personal devotion to a living Lord is infused into Christian service. The measure of our obligation to our fellows is the measure of our indebtedness to Christ, and fellowship with Him becomes the basis of that service, as it is also the promise of its effectiveness.

The Church is called to-day to a double service. For convenience in administration a distinction is made between the two parts of this service, and we speak of social service at home and of foreign missions abroad. If this difference in name should ever lead to a division of interest and allegiance on the part of members of the Church, such a result would be deplorable. A moment’s reflection suffices to show that the two are one. It is one Lord who in Himself commands this work. The object of both is

¹ Streatfeild, *ut supra*, p. 121.

The Gospel Message

the social, moral, and spiritual uplifting of men as men, and not as related to ourselves, and we rely upon the work of the same divine Spirit to bring each branch of the one service to its destined fruition. To attempt to distinguish the one from the other is to divide the interest of the Church, and to separate individual service into two compartments which may become mutually exclusive, leading to an inefficient service and an impoverished spiritual life in each department of the common service. Now when we ask what shall be the motive and the sustaining power of such service, we are at once driven back upon what we have seen to be the burden of the Gospels—fellowship with God made possible for man in the God-Man Jesus Christ. There is danger of confusion in laying down as the motive of service what is really a feature or quality of the service in question. We speak of compassion and seek to arouse a feeling of pity in the hearts of men by describing the uncounted hosts of the heathen world passing to a hopeless death, or we depict the no less terrible conditions of life to be found in the slums of great cities. The compassion of Jesus will ever be found in the service accomplished in His name; but to make this pitifulness the motive for the service is fraught with peril. In the presentation of such a motive the centre shifts from the religious to the social and intellectual aspects of life. It reduces Christianity to a merely civilizing agency, affecting men mostly on the material and intellectual side of their nature. The Christian who allows himself to drift into any

The Christ of the Gospels

such conception of his work not only fails to provide for the saving of the whole nature of those for whom he works, but he robs himself of the only power that will sustain him, and bring into his own heart, whether he reaps the fruit of his efforts or does not, the glow and the joy which bespeak the enrichment of his own life.

Much the same may be said with reference to the other motive so often urged—that of obedience. We speak of ‘marching orders,’ meaning thereby the great commission given by our Lord to His Church. The metaphor implied in the familiar description makes a ready appeal to the imagination, yet to say that our motive is obedience to a command is again to confuse one of the qualities of our service with the underlying motive of which we are in search. Obedience to the law of Christ would characterize the service of the Church even if the great commission had never been spoken; but if we are to find a motive which shall bring under a welcome obligation those who can go into all the world, and those who cannot go—which shall be comprehensive, intensive, and universal, we must get behind the commandment to Him who gave it. When the believer has made himself one with his Lord, he will not speak of commands however revered. He will have passed from the reign of law to the yet greater control of grace. Knowing in himself the grace of the Lord Jesus, how though He was rich, yet for his sake He became poor, he will give expression to the divine life within him, and to the same extent, by

The Gospel Message

pouring forth in the service of mankind his wealth, his powers of body and of mind, nay life itself, if others may live. Compassion and obedience will still remain in his service, but they will be deeper and richer than that which he may have known before. They will be the love and obedience of Christ Himself, as the life of his Lord quickens within his heart.

The peril of failure in service is a serious one, and that peril is more imminent than the superficial observer of modern life may think. The materialistic tendency of the day has invaded the Christian Church. It shows itself in those who would empty the Christian faith of all that is supernatural, and accept as its sufficient declaration the doctrine of 'a good time coming'; and the same tendency reappears in others who would not go all the way with those to whom 'historical investigation' means the elimination of the supernatural, but who nevertheless under the pressure of social problems seek to identify the purpose of Jesus with the betterment of material conditions of life. The reproach has been flung at the Church that sometimes 'the modern priest is more concerned for the unemployed than for the unrepentant'.¹ That the gospel of Jesus Christ contains a definite social reference and prospect few will wish to deny. In accepting and using the language of Jewish eschatology our Lord shows that He, too, has a social and political promise for the world. But the material good is always a secondary product of

¹ Stanley Leathes, *Cambridge Modern History*, vol. xii. p. 14.

The Christ of the Gospels

the kingdom. The kingdom of God and His righteousness came first; the other things were to be 'added.' They do not form the isolated object of our aspiration. They belong to a far more comprehensive scheme of good than that which is found in the material setting of human life. Christ contains in Himself the only sufficient power to bring in the longed-for 'redress for all mankind.' It is in Himself that the consummation of life is reached, and any attempt to concentrate attention upon social or material forms rather than upon Him is to deal with the effect rather than with the cause. The modern emphasis upon so-called objective Christianity, whether it is applied in the school of historical criticism, or in the philanthropic service of the Church, is doomed to failure to the extent to which it excludes the view of a transcendent Christ. It is anthropocentric, whereas the theocentric interpretation of the universe is that which alone explains the past and promises to fulfil the future. It accounts for the findings of the science of Comparative Religion, and it provides the only adequate motive power for realizing that divinity of man, that kingdom of God, which is the true content of Christian eschatology. Interest threatens to become concentrated upon human conditions; it should be held by the God who is above all, and through all, and in all. Our vision is obsessed by the darkness; we give ourselves up to the study of the surrounding gloom; but it is in the light of God that we see light, and our thought should be held by the Divine even when we are en-

The Gospel Message

gaged in the activities of service. Deity, with all the insistence of love, for ever presses upon man, the child of divine love, and therein lies the hope of our uplifting, of our fulfilment. Man is born from above, and his eyes should be lifted up to the heights of Deity from which cometh help. Failing this, those who serve will never bring that which quickens into the moribund mass with which they are concerned; and meantime they themselves are robbed of that spiritual rapture, that ineffable peace in which, even in the hour of disappointment and agony, they may know that they, like their Master, have overcome the world.

There is yet another effect of this great gospel message of union with God in Jesus Christ at which we must glance. Together with the new conception of Christian service given to the Church there has been given in these last days the vision of that which formed the burden of our Lord's own prayer—the unity of the Christian Church. It carries with it the consummation of all things. The world will accept all that Christ stands for when the Christian Church is one, even as the Divine Son is one with the Father (John xvii. 21). This is a hope which comprehends every hope which has ever lived for one moment within the spiritual consciousness of mankind. Every religious instinct which is true finds its fulfilment here. This is the perfection of perfections. The whole Christian community is to be 'perfected into one,' and the type of that unity is found in that which exists within the Godhead.

The Christ of the Gospels

The Church has never allowed this divine consummation to pass from its spiritual aspiration and hope. Indeed the Church which did so would thereby prove itself traitor to the deepest feeling of the Saviour's heart. But it has always found itself vexed in spirit and baffled in purpose by the fact that its divisions were many and deep-seated, and that there was before it no theory of unity which found a general acceptance. It is clear that before we can rightly speak of schism, we must first decide what constitutes the unity of the Church. A decision on the part of any number of believers to worship in some particular way, or to administer the affairs of their communal life in this way or in that, need not be a schism. There is no question which more urgently demands an answer than this—'What are the essentials of the Christian Church?' We shall not attempt an answer to so great a question in the closing paragraphs of this lecture. But it is in concord with the burden of all that has been said that this unity is to be sought in connexion with fellowship with God in Christ. In the great prayer from which we have already quoted we read (xvii. 22)—'The glory which Thou hast given Me I have given them, that they may be one even as We are one; I in them and Thou in Me, that they may be perfected into one.' So in the Epistle to the Ephesians (ii. 21) we read that it is IN CHRIST that 'each several building fitly framed together groweth into a holy temple in the Lord.' We are justified, then, in seeking the unity which all desire, not along

The Gospel Message

the lines of organic unity, nor in any system of Church orders, however revered they may have become, and however charged they may be with historic association, but wherever the presence of its one Lord is realized. Where two or three are gathered together in His name, there He is in the midst; and it is impossible for any one, unless blinded with prejudice, to deny that it is the presence of the Christ that makes the Church. That presence is realized not merely on the altar, where His own appointed symbols become to us the means whereby we feed upon Him by faith and drink His blood; but wherever some broken penitent stretches lame hands of faith if haply he may find Him, or wherever in the slums of the city or in the hovels of the Pariah, men and women in His name, and through His immediate yet transcendent power, attempt the greater works of man's spiritual uplifting, there is the Spirit of Christ and there is the Christian Church.

We have seen that the Christian ethic, the Christian service, and the Christian Church alike find their explanation as well as their fulfilment in that union with God in Christ which is made possible to us through this gospel of the grace of God. These effects, it must be confessed, are sufficiently impressive, sufficiently far-reaching in their relation to human life. There is, however, yet another. And this last is greatest of all, inasmuch as it is the secret of each of the others. It is more elemental. It has to do with the life of God in the soul of man. It is

The Christ of the Gospels

the fellowship of the individual with God in Christ. Here the two great essential existences are face to face, and deep calleth unto deep. When the great surrender is made the human soul enters into the life which is life indeed, and Christ in him becomes the hope of glory. God reveals His Son in him, and henceforth he lives, yet not he, but Christ lives in him. Christ is to him 'an inward light,' the day-star arises in his heart and becomes a far more authentic guide than broken systems, which 'have their day, and cease to be,' can ever become. The indwelling Christ is more than light; He is power too. He who has entered into this life is of God, and has overcome the world, 'because greater is He that is in you than he that is in the world.' The indwelling Christ is more than power: 'The Light was the Life of men,' and 'he that hath the Son hath the Life.' There follows the peace which passes all understanding, and the joy which means that the human soul has reached its goal, and that the human spirit has closed with the infinite object of its long search, and man is one with God.

It is the fashion to disparage such teaching as the mystic dream of visionary spirits. We would claim that it is a fact of experience—that all down the ages a great company of men and women have borne witness to what they refuse to describe in any other terms than those which speak of Christ indwelling within them. They have lived lives of self-commending beauty, they have toiled hard and immensely furthered the moral, social, and spiritual

The Gospel Message

welfare of men, and they have died and left it on record that they have lived and worked in the strength and illumination of their personal intercourse with God in Jesus Christ. To thrust such facts of experience away is unscientific; and if investigation guarantees the facts, then to neglect it, to refuse to seek it for the enrichment of our own spiritual life, is folly in the extreme. Both in the gospel and in the experience of men of many races and of all the centuries fellowship with Christ is presented to us as the supreme possibility of human life, admitting us to all the fullness of God. Such a fulfilment is worthy of an infinite and eternal Spirit who, guiding and shaping the thought and aspiration of mankind from the first dim gropings of the human mind, leads the race of man higher and higher in spiritual illumination and power to apprehend until in the fullness of time He sends forth His Son, who reveals the Father and makes the love divine in the heart of Eternal God the archetype of a love in which man himself shall find the fulfilment of his life, closing at last with God in a fellowship which is life eternal. But when the rapture sweeps our spirits into heights of ecstasy at which we only guess to-day, when the deep peace ensuing drowns the immortal spirit, and all we are is lost in God, we shall know that we have been led to those heights of glory through the ministry of the Gospel of the Grace of God, the Gospel of the Incarnation, the Gospel of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

PRINTED AT THE NEWCASTLE-UPON-TYNE PRESS
WATERLOO HOUSE, THORNTON STREET

BY THE SAME AUTHOR

Crown 8vo, cloth,

Two Shillings net

THE LIFE OF FAITH

BY

Rev. W. W. Holdsworth, M.A.

*Professor of New Testament Language and Literature,
Handsworth College.*

CONTENTS

- I.—THE OBEDIENCE OF FAITH
- II.—THE RESPONSE TO FAITH
- III.—SPIRITUAL LIFE A SPIRITUAL COMMUNION
- IV.—THE ISSUES OF LIFE
- V.—THE INFORMING SPIRIT
- VI.—THE LIFE TRIUMPHANT
- VII.—THE CONSECRATION OF LIFE

APPENDIX—FAITH IN THE FOURTH GOSPEL

From the foreword by Prof. W. T. Davison, D.D.:

‘One feature perhaps more than any other distinguishes the book, that it sets forth faith as a ^{life}—the living principle of a living spirit, the very vital breath of those who are, and of those who would be, Christians. The author of this booklet, as he well knows, has touched only a corner of a vast theme; but he has so illumined a few aspects of it that readers will be led to explore further for themselves—the only way to make the hidden treasures of the kingdom their own.’

CHARLES H. KELLY, 25-35 City Road, and
26 Paternoster Row, **LONDON, E.C.**
AND OF ALL BOOKSELLERS.

Some Recent Fernley Lectures

THE SPIRITUAL SENSE IN SACRED LEGEND. By E. J. BRAILSFORD. Second Thousand. Large crown 8vo, cloth, gilt. 3s. 6d.

'The sacred Legends reviewed are all related to the Bible—they refer to its characters, or amplify its incidents, or interpret its doctrines. They have been drawn from a well-defined area. . . . Having accepted the phenomena of Sacred Legend, I have ventured to suggest a philosophy which accounts for them, and which furnishes a clue to their natural classification.'—AUTHOR.

THE WITNESS OF ISRAEL. By W. J. MOULTON, M.A. Third Thousand. Large crown 8vo, cloth, gilt. 3s. 6d.

This volume is a study, in the light of modern knowledge, of the witness of the Old Testament to Christianity. It describes the founding of the nation of Israel, and discusses the influence of Babylonia, Egypt, and Palestine upon the Hebrews. Further chapters outline the prophetic anticipation of the future, and follow the course of the history to the Christian era. Finally, the author shows, in view of present-day criticism, the way in which the Old Testament hopes have been realized in Jesus Christ.

MAN'S PARTNERSHIP WITH DIVINE PROVIDENCE. By JOHN TELFORD, B.A. Second Thousand. Large crown 8vo. 3s. 6d.

'Its fifteen learned and well-digested chapters contain a full and interesting exposition of that human belief in divine providence which underlies most known systems of religion. Popularly written, and skilled in supporting its teaching by modern instances, the book cannot but prove acceptable.'—*Scotsman*.

THE REVIVAL OF RELIGION IN ENGLAND IN THE 18TH CENTURY. By JOHN S. SIMON. Third Thousand. 3s. 6d.

'Mr Simon's book is a masterpiece. He is, so far as we can trace him, almost unimpeachably accurate. He is candid and generous in his judgements, though quite firm. This book is the result of a lifetime's thought and study, and deserves to take a permanent place in religious literature.'—Sir W. R. NICOLL in *British Weekly*.

PERSECUTION IN THE EARLY CHURCH. A Chapter in the History of Renunciation. By H. B. WORKMAN, M.A., D.Lit. Fourth Thousand. 3s. 6d.

'Mr Workman has been unsparing of his labour, and the list of authorities whom he has consulted forms a useful bibliography of the subject. On the vexed question of the extent of persecution Mr Workman expresses himself with good sense and moderation. This is a really valuable book.'—*Spectator*.

THE UNREALIZED LOGIC OF RELIGION. By W. H. FITCHETT, B.A., LL.D. Twelfth Thousand. Large crown 8vo, cloth. 3s. 6d.

'The novelty of the book is not so much in the Theistic argument, as in the reinforcement of Christian apologetics from sources which, if not hitherto neglected, have not been used so effectively as they might have been. . . . It is an able piece of work.'—*Spectator*.

CHARLES H. KELLY, 25-35 City Road, and
26 Paternoster Row, **LONDON, E.C.**
AND OF ALL BOOKSELLERS.

Volumes on Biblical Subjects

THE NEW TESTAMENT: Its Authorship, Date, and Worth.

By J. AGAR BEET, D.D. Small crown 8vo, cloth, gilt. 1s. 6d. net.

'This new manual of Dr Beet's will meet the first requirements of many whose thoughts are exercised about some of the surface problems of the New Testament. The manual deals in a most interesting, lucid, and forceful manner with the writings of the New Testament and with cognate subjects. The minds of many would be reinforced by an intimate acquaintance with this volume.'—*Primitive Methodist Leader*.

THE NEW TESTAMENT PORTRAIT OF JESUS. By GEORGE PARKIN, B.D. Crown 8vo, cloth, gilt. 2s. 6d.

'Mr Parkin pursues the method of Biblical theology and gives first "Paul's Presentation," taking the Epistles separately; then that of James, the Lord's brother; then those given in 1 Peter and Hebrews: and so on, concluding with the Apocalypse. A minute examination proves Mr Parkin to be a close and scholarly student of the sacred text.'—*London Quarterly Review*.

THE HISTORY OF THE ENGLISH BIBLE. By W. F. MOULTON, M.A., D.D. Revised and enlarged by Revs. JAMES HOPE MOULTON, M.A., D.Lit., D.D., and W. FIDDIAN MOULTON, M.A.

REV. J. H. RITSON (one of the Secretaries of the British and Foreign Bible Society) in the *Methodist Recorder* says:—'If we had to choose one volume out of all the Bibliography of this subject, we should have no hesitation in recommending this volume. It is the work of a master hand, and has never been superseded. It is characterized by accuracy of scholarship combined with simplicity of style.'

THE BIBLE: Its Origin and Authority. By W. F. LOFT-HOUSE, M.A. Small crown 8vo, cloth, gilt. 1s. 6d. net.

This book gives an account of the manner in which the books of the Bible were written, and afterwards collected into the canon of Scripture. It discusses the importance of the manuscripts and versions, and the various English translations. The Bible is then compared with the sacred books of other religions, and the author gives in a clear and definite shape the conceptions of its revelation, inspiration, and authority.

THE LAW OF THE SPIRIT: Studies In the Epistle to the Philippians. By H. LEFROY YORKE, M.A., B.D. Large crown 8vo, cloth, gilt. 3s. 6d. net.

'It shows the capacity of the sermon very nearly at its highest; for there is continuity and yet variety, there is true spiritual insight, there is human sympathy, there is scholarship, and there is love of it.'—*Expository Times*.

THE EPISTLES OF PAUL THE APOSTLE: Their Origin and Contents. By G. G. FINDLAY, B.A., D.D. Eleventh Thousand. Small crown. 8vo. 2s. 6d.

'We have not any introduction to the Pauline Epistles so useful to the Bible student as this little book by Prof. Findlay. For here there is fullness of knowledge as well as the wisest restraint in the statement of it.'—*Expository Times*.

CHARLES H. KELLY, 25-35 City Road, and
26 Paternoster Row, **LONDON, E.C.**
AND OF ALL BOOKSELLERS.

Volumes on Biblical Subjects

IN LANDS OF ART AND HOLY WRIT. BY T. W. FAWTHROP, F.R.G.S. Large crown 8vo, cloth, gilt, gilt top, 58 illustrations specially taken for the volume. 3s. 6d. net.

'Mr Fawthrop has not only a keen eye for the salient features of the lands and peoples he has visited, but a wonderful knowledge of their history, and a quite exceptional power of using what he sees as illustrations of familiar scenes and passages in Holy Writ. The result is a volume which, with its numerous photographs, will be as much appreciated by the Bible student.'—*London Quarterly Review*.

THE BOOKS OF THE PROPHETS IN THEIR HISTORICAL SUCCESSION. BY PROF. G. G. FINDLAY, D.D. Small crown 8vo. 2s. 6d. each.

Vol. 1. To The Fall of Samaria. Vol. 2. The first Isaiah to Nahum. Vol. 3. Jeremiah and His Group.

Dr Findlay's plan is to sketch the history of a period, to fit the different prophetic sections into their right place, and to deduce the great teachings that are of abiding religious value. Other scholarly material is supplied in the form of chronological tables and subject analyses, of discussion critical and literary, and of references to other authorities whose opinions deserve to be weighed.

STUDIES IN THE OLD TESTAMENT. BY GEORGE JACKSON, B.A. Third Thousand. Large crown 8vo, cloth, gilt. 3s. 6d. net.

'No intelligent and well-balanced man can read through the six chapters which comprise this volume without a deep sense of gratitude to the man who thought it worth while to write frankly, plainly, on profound and perplexed problems. This volume is a real and a very noble contribution. It will make for faith.'—*Toronto Globe*.

THE SOCIAL TEACHING OF THE BIBLE. Edited by S. E. KEEBLE. Third Thousand. Crown 8vo, cloth, gilt. 2s. net.

In this volume, written by a bevy of brilliant scholars and social experts, we have the first attempt to cover the whole ground of the social teaching of the Bible. There are, in all, fourteen chapters: one introductory to the whole subject, seven upon the Hebrew, and six upon the Christian Writings. Five Doctors of Divinity, six Oxford and Cambridge University and six London University Scholars and Sociologists, contribute to the volume.

THE PRAISES OF ISRAEL: An Introduction to the Study of the Psalms. With an Appendix treating briefly of the Age, Authorship, and Contents of each Psalm. By Prof. W. T. DAVISON, M.A., D.D. Sixth Thousand. Small crown 8vo. 2s. 6d.

'Prof. Davison's introduction to the Psalms is as nearly perfect as a manual can be. It is the work of a reverent and open-minded scholar, who has spared no pains to compress into this volume the best information and the most trustworthy results arrived at by himself and other experts. To read it is an education in criticism.'—*British Weekly*.

THE WISDOM LITERATURE OF THE OLD TESTAMENT. (Job, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs.) BY Prof. W. T. DAVISON, M.A., D.D. Fourth Thousand. Small crown 8vo. 2s. 6d.

'Dr Davison modestly claims for his book that it is but an introduction to more elaborate volumes. At the same time the careful student is put in possession of much that is of solid value. The book is the production of a man of competent learning, and the spirit in which he writes is all that could be wished.'—*Scotsman*.

CHARLES H. KELLY, 25-35 City Road, and 26 Paternoster Row, **LONDON, E.C.**
AND OF ALL BOOKSELLERS.

Princeton Theological Seminary Libraries



1 1012 01193 8315

Date Due

MY3149

DEC 18 1971



